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Just Like Dad: Silas Aiken's Odd Life in the Grand Canyon

New Year's Resolution No. 77: Explore Bill Williams River Rd.

Craig Childs' Mysterious Encounter in the Dark Woods

ARIZONA HIGHWAYS

ESCAPE·EXPLORE·EXPERIENCE

JANUARY 2011

WEEKEND GETAWAYS

Our Favorite Ways to Explore the State's Lakes, Rivers, Canyons, Wild Blue Yonder and More!

PLUS

10 of the Weirdest Things You'll See Along the Road

AND

UNDER THE WEATHER: We Sent a Photographer Into the Outdoors on a Cloudy Day

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contents

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FEATURES

16 WEEKEND GETAWAYS

Unless you're agoraphobic or tied to the couch, literally, there's no good reason not to explore Arizona. The Grand Canyon State is bursting with adventure ops, and there's something for everyone, including houseboating on Lake Powell, whitewater-rafting on the Salt River and horseback-riding in Cold Water Canyon. If none of those get you going, we've got more.

EDITED BY KELLY KRAMER

30 UNDER THE WEATHER

The sun shines a lot in Arizona — about 90 percent of the year, compared to 30 percent in Juneau, Alaska. Although most Arizonans will tell you they love the sun, there's a universal vibe of excitement and relief when the clouds roll in. Because it happens so rarely, we sent a photographer into the outdoors during a recent wave of inclement weather. We thought it would come in handy the next time you're sick of the sun.

A PORTFOLIO BY LARRY LINDAHL

40 SHEDDING SOME LIGHT

Archaeoastronomy is the study of prehistoric sites where ancient people once aligned rock art to celestial events. There are places like this all over the Southwest — places that intentionally catch sunrise on crucial mornings such as the solstice or equinox, or are aligned with the long rhythms of the moon. On a recent morning on the Mogollon Rim, our intrepid essayist stumbled upon some archaeoastronomers at work.

BY CRAIG CHILDS

44 OUT THERE!

Odd, quirky, outlandish, strange ... there are plenty of adjectives to describe some of the stuff you'll see along the road in rural Arizona. Bizarre, weird and wacky will work, as well. This month we feature 10 of our favorite peculiarities, but it's just the beginning.

BY JACKIE DISHNER

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARK LIPCZYNSKI

DEPARTMENTS

2 EDITOR'S LETTER

3 CONTRIBUTORS

4 LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

5 THE JOURNAL

People, places and things from around the state, including a profile of Silas Aiken, the man who lives in the Grand Canyon (just like his parents did); the new order at an old lodge in Paradise Valley; and a taste of the Old West in Wickenburg.

52 SCENIC DRIVE

Bill Williams River Road: Along with your other New Year's resolutions, make a plan to visit this scenic drive along the Colorado River.

54 HIKE OF THE MONTH

Bog Springs/Kent Springs Loop: Overeat over the holidays? This trail is a great way to shake off the cookies and mashed potatoes.

56 WHERE IS THIS?

GET MORE ONLINE

www.arizonahighways.com

Visit our website for details on weekend getaways, hiking, lodging, dining, photography workshops, slideshows and more. Also, check out our blog for regular posts on just about anything related to travel in Arizona, including road closures, environmental news, festivals and other valuable infomation we couldn't fit in the magazine.

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Like us on Facebook and get a behind-the-scenes look at *Arizona Highways*, along with exclusive photos, trivia contests, quirky news and more.

Photographic Prints Available Prints of some photographs in this issue are available for purchase. To view options,

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A black-necked stilt keeps its feet dry at Water Ranch's Riparian Preserve in Gilbert. PHOTOGRAPH BY BRUCE TAUBERT

FRONT COVER For more than 16 years, Red Rock Biplane Tours has treated visitors to aerial views of the striking landscapes of Sedona and Oak Creek Canyon. PHOTOGRAPH BY JEFF KIDA

BACK COVER Sunlight illuminates the delicate form of a prickly pear blossom. PHOTOGRAPH BY SUZANNE MATHIA

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editor's LETTER

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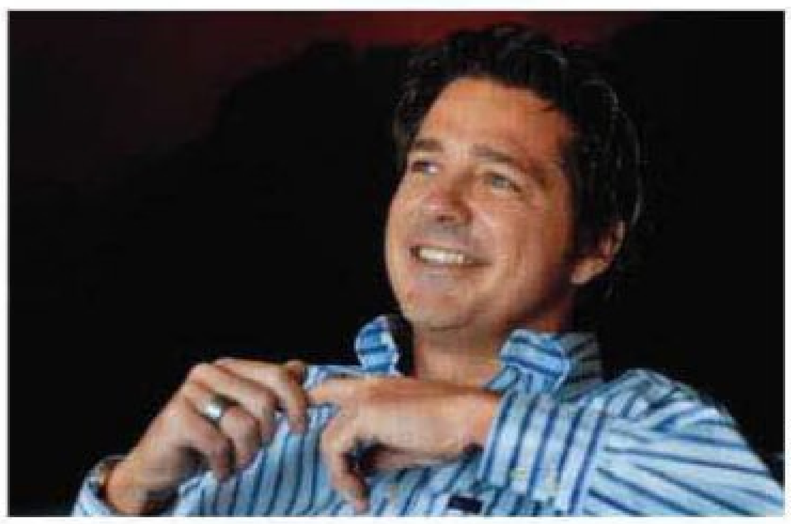

JEFF KIDA

Get Your Motor Runnin'

On the Upper Salt River, you want to get Scratchy. Not in the form of an adjective — that could ruin your day. Instead, you want the proper noun. Uppercase Scratchy. The comical river guide whose personality is a combination of Dennis the Menace and Huckleberry Finn. Scratchy, like dozens of other free-spirited college-age kids, spends every spring in the back of a rubber raft filled with people like Kelly Kramer, Jeff Kida and me. All of the guides are dependable, but Scratchy's the guide you want. He's a riot.

Scratchy works for an outfitter called Canyon Rio Rafting, and it's his job to safely guide average Joes — people who couldn't float a rubber duck in a mud puddle, much less run a Class V rapid on their own — down what is arguably one of the most scenic rivers in North America. Our trip on the Upper Salt took place last spring, after one of the snowiest winters in decades. At one point in early 2010, the river ran at a rate of 65,000 cubic feet per second. That means if you were to pick a spot on the riverbank, the equivalent of 65,000 basketballs would fly past that spot in a single second. *WHOOSH!*

It was a little slower the day Kelly, Jeff and I launched, but the river was still raging, and Scratchy still ordered us around as if he were Patton: "Forward two!" "Back one!" "Stop!" Although I never asked Scratchy about his impish nickname — with river runners, some things are better left unsaid — I can tell you he was all business when he needed to be. On the river and on the beach, where he flipped burgers, roasted hot dogs and fueled us up for the final set of rapids. "Forward two!" "Back one!" "Stop!"

Rafting the Salt River is one of several weekend getaways in this month's cover story, along with backpacking in the Grand Canyon, horseback-riding in Cold Water Canyon, house-boating on Lake Powell, chilling out in Tubac, exploring the Hopi Reservation and screaming through the skies of Sedona in an open-cockpit biplane. Maryal Miller made that trip. Her text to me just before she left: "Leavin' on a biplane, don't know when I'll be back again ... no, seriously, this could end badly."

She'd never been in a biplane before — who has? — and she was a little apprehensive. Nevertheless, she made it back down without throwing up. What's more, she landed with a swagger in her step, and now she wants a biplane of her own. If that tells you anything.

Open cockpits and whitewater rafts are exciting ways to get your motor runnin', but they're not for everyone. If you'd prefer something more lead-footed, something quirky that can be done from the front seat of a Subaru, you might get a kick out of *Out There!*, our story about the outlandish things you'll see along the roads of rural Arizona. It's a weird collection, and most of the stuff is BIG: the largest Tiki head, the tallest cowboy, the biggest ball of stickers. None of those things are on anybody's bucket list, but sleeping under the stars on the Mogollon Rim probably is. I know it was on Craig Childs' list.

As an intrepid outdoorsman, Craig's spent many nights up on the Rim, but a recent trip was different. It was the first time he'd heard strange voices: "It was just before dawn," he writes in *Shedding Some Light*. "An inkling of light touched the sky outside the tent. Wind belted through a surrounding copse of juniper trees and piñon pines. I could barely hear them, men talking, coming closer." You'll have to read his excellent essay to learn more about the mystery men. All I can tell you is that it wasn't Scratchy. I don't know where he was that night, but it wasn't anyplace quiet. Wherever Scratchy goes, things get wild.

ROBERT STIEVE, *editor*

Follow me on Twitter: www.twitter.com/azhighways.

AND THE WINNER IS ...

In case you hadn't heard, *Arizona Highways* was recently named Magazine of the Year by the International Regional Magazine Association — we finished first among magazines with a circulation of more than 40,000. In addition, *AH* won a dozen other awards for writing, design and photography. (For a complete list of winners, visit our blog: http://arizonahighways.wordpress.com.) Hats off to our staff and contributors, and also to our colleagues at *Oklahoma Today*, which was named Magazine of the Year for publications with a circulation of less than 40,000.

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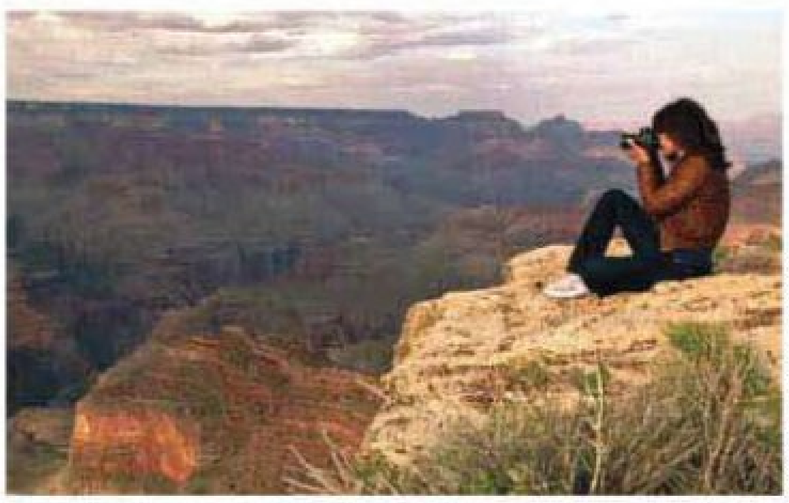

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If you like what you see in this magazine every month, check out *Arizona Highways Television*, an Emmy Award-winning program hosted by former news anchor Robin Sewell. For broadcast times, visit our website, www.arizonahighways.com, and click the *Arizona Highways Television* link on our home page.

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ARIZONA HIGHWAYS
JANUARY 2011 VOL. 87, NO. 1

800-543-5432
www.arizonahighways.com

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Arizona Highways® (ISSN 0004-1521) is published monthly by the Arizona Department of Transportation. Subscription price: $24 a year in the U.S., $44 outside the U.S. Single copy: $3.99 U.S. Call **800-543-5432. Subscription correspondence and change of address information:** *Arizona Highways*, P.O. Box 433124, Palm Coast, FL 32143-3124. Periodical postage paid at Phoenix, AZ, and at additional mailing office. CANADA POST INTERNATIONAL PUBLICATIONS MAIL PRODUCT (CANADIAN DISTRIBUTION) SALES AGREEMENT NO. 41220511. SEND RETURNS TO WORLDCOLOR, P.O. BOX 875, WINDSOR, ON N9A 6P2. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Arizona Highways*, P.O. Box 433124, Palm Coast, FL 32143-3124.
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PRODUCED IN THE USA

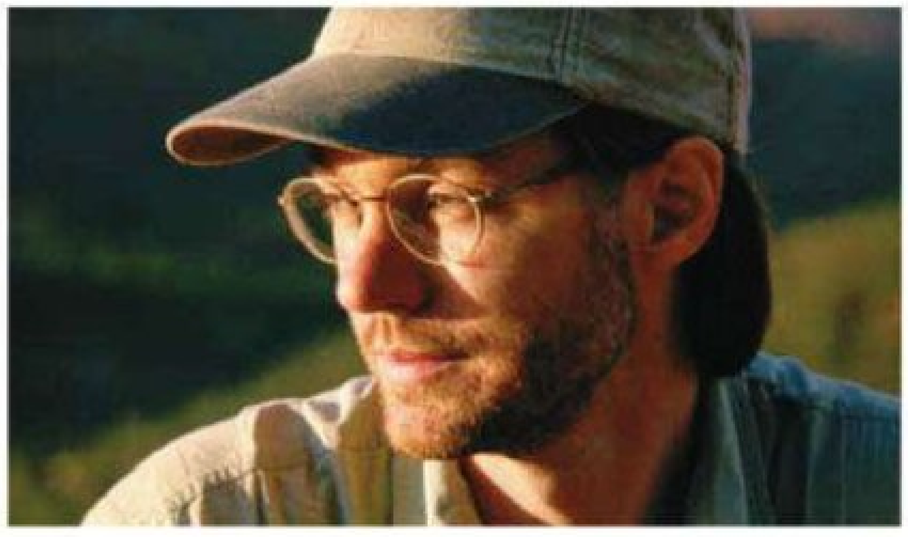
contributors

MARYAL MILLER

The ability to tell someone's story and tell it well is a practiced craft. For writer Maryal Miller, the craft has allowed her to experience many amazing things. "I feel very lucky because the only thing I've ever really been sure about is that I was put on this Earth to write," she says. A daredevil at heart, Miller took writing to new heights for this month's cover story (*Weekend Getaways*, page 16). "Flying over Sedona in a biplane gave me a totally different way of seeing the area," she says. "I've been there a million times, but I've never seen it from above, and it's absolutely gorgeous." On normal days, when her two feet are safely planted on the ground, Miller dives into movies and music. "I love movies almost as much as I love my Yorkiepoo, Hamlet — and that's a serious statement." Miller is a frequent contributor to *Arizona Highways*.

MARK LIPCZYNSKI

Photographer Mark Lipczynski has a knack for the eccentric. "Any way you look at it, odd things are appealing to me," he says. That penchant for the out of the ordinary made him our first choice to shoot *Out There!* (page 44), a story about the state's quirky roadside attractions. Growing up in an industrial part of northeastern Ohio, Mark, his brother and his amateur-photographer father spent a lot of time chasing and photographing trains. "I suppose on a subconscious level I continue doing photography because it keeps me connected with those memories," he says. "Arizona is an extraordinary place filled with an intense geological and cultural history and prehistory," he says of his other passion, history. "One doesn't have to look hard to see how Arizona has evolved."



LARRY LINDAHL

Photographer Larry Lindahl loves the Southwest. After moving to Sedona in 1993, he knew he'd finally found his home. "The landscape here made me want to get into photography," Lindahl says. In this month's portfolio (*Under the Weather*, page 30), Lindahl showcases that landscape in a way that's rarely seen on postcards. "I found a story based on what most people would consider bad weather," he says. Risking his equipment in torrential rain, he captured the famous red rocks in a different light. "Weather can reshape the landscape incrementally," he says. "There's a primordial energy to storms." In addition to *Arizona Highways*, Lindahl's work has appeared in *Outdoor Photography, American Archaeology, Western Horseman* and *Southwest Art*.

— Interviewed by Allison Oswalt

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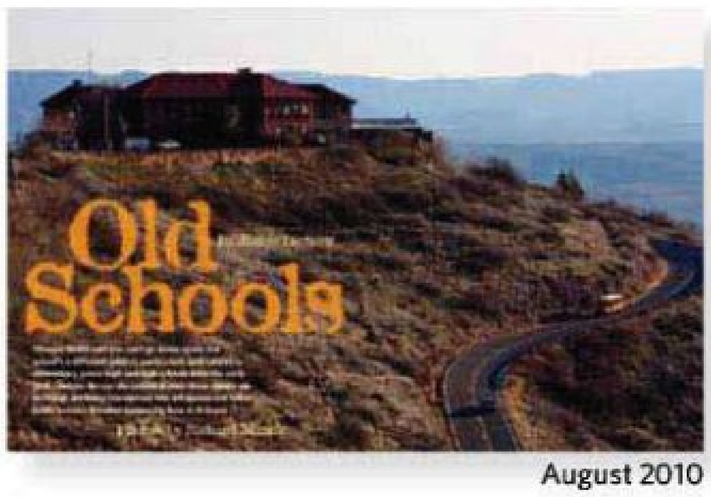
SCHOOL LESSON

I found the article in the August 2010 issue [*Old Schools*] interesting. I've seen all of them. Also, I attended Bullion Plaza school in Miami [Arizona] from 1953 to 1955. You mentioned that it was for Hispanic and Native American students. When I was there, it was open to all of us who lived in Miami, regardless of race.

STEVE GILBERT, VAIL, ARIZONA



August 2010

OH, BOY!

What gorgeous Hopi photos in the September 2010 issue [*All Dressed Up*]. Thanks for the inclusion of the Hopi names, which gives a nice touch to the presentation. However, I think there is a small error in the Hopi name for "moisture-drinking boy." I think you'll find that "boy" in Hopi is "tiyo," and that his name in Hopi would thus be "Palhikwtiyo."

KEN GARY, SAN DIEGO

September 2010

WELL-JUDGED

I happily renewed my subscription after one year of service. The photography is excellent, and all I have to do is visualize a scene of the San Francisco Peaks to take me to a happy place. The most inspiring article I have ever read was the story on Judge Joseph Flies-Away [*Looking for Balance*, October 2010]. I had to re-read it many times over. I hope to be first in line to receive a personally autographed copy of his book when it's released.

MARY LOHR, ESCONDIDO, CALIFORNIA

October 2010

PLUCKED OUT OF THIN AIR

The article on the wood duck [*In Full Plume*, October 2010] was great, but it's worth noting that besides the fashion industry, fly fishermen and women utilized the plumage for multiple dry and wet flies. As mentioned in the article, the early 20th century decline of the wood duck population was due to the hat/fashion industry. However, the feathers of choice were the 8-10 large dorsal feathers located on each side on an adult male. These black- and white-tipped gold nuptial feathers would begin emerging at 90 days post-molt (early summer), and would continue with the replacement of juvenile feathers for the next 55 days. The primary, secondary and various covert feathers of the wood ducks' wings are generally dark with only an iridescent quality and would have been of little interest to the fashion industry. The spring hunting of these birds as food and for their outstanding plumage was detrimental to their viable population.

PHIL PETERSON, REEDSBURG, WISCONSIN

October 2010

A PLACE IN THE SUN

The October issue of *Arizona Highways* displays a powerful visual feast. The first thing I did when the magazine arrived was sit outside on the patio where bright sunlight made the photographs really pop. Especially awesome are Morey Milbradt's scene of aspens along Terry Flat Loop, Tom Danielsen's view of White House Ruin, Chuck Lawson's panorama of Chinle Wash in Canyon de Chelly, Lon McAdam's Superstition Mountains portfolio, and George Stocking's shot of Vermilion Cliffs sandstone "teepees." If you haven't looked at works of art like these in the sunshine, you really should.

RUSS BUTCHER, OCEANSIDE, CALIFORNIA

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STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND CIRCULATION

Title of Publication: Arizona Highways
Publication No.: ISSN 0004-1521
Date of Filing: September 28, 2010
Frequency of issues: Monthly
Number of issues published annually: Twelve
Annual subscription price: $24.00 U.S. one year
Publisher: Win Holden
Editor: Robert Stieve
Managing Editor: Kelly Kramer; address below
Complete mailing address of known office of publication: 2039 W. Lewis Ave., Phoenix, (Maricopa) AZ 85009-2893
Owner: State of Arizona, 206 S. 17th Ave., Phoenix, AZ 85007
Known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 percent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities: None
The purpose, function, and nonprofit status of this organization and the exempt status for federal income tax purposes has not changed during preceding 12 months.

	ISSUE DATE FOR CIRCULATION DATA BELOW: Nov. '09-Oct. '10 Average no. copies each issue during preceding 12 months	Oct. '10 Actual no. copies of single issue published nearest to filing date
EXTENT AND NATURE OF CIRCULATION		
A. Total number copies printed	165,346	160,408
B. Paid circulation		
1. Outside-county, mail subscriptions	127,543	125,789
2. In-county subscriptions	--	--
3. Sales through dealers, carriers, street vendors, counter sales and other non-USPS paid distribution	13,904	14,325
4. Other classes mailed through the USPS	4,275	4,136
C. Total paid circulation	145,723	144,250
D. Free distribution by mail		
1. Outside-county	197	151
2. In-county	--	--
3. Other classes mailed through the USPS	--	--
4. Free distribution outside the mail	5,522	1,682
E. Total free distribution	5,719	1,833
F. Total distribution	151,442	146,083
G. Copies not distributed	13,904	14,325
H. Total	165,346	160,408
I. Percent paid circulation	96.2%	98.7%

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MARK LIPCZYNSKI

Deep Sleep!

One of the most unusual sites along Historic Route 66 is Grand Canyon Caverns & Inn, which is located between Seligman and Peach Springs. The natural limestone cavern sits 210 feet underground, and is home to the world's largest, deepest, oldest and quietest hotel room (see *Out There!*, page 44). *Information: 928-422-3223 or www.gccaverns.com.*

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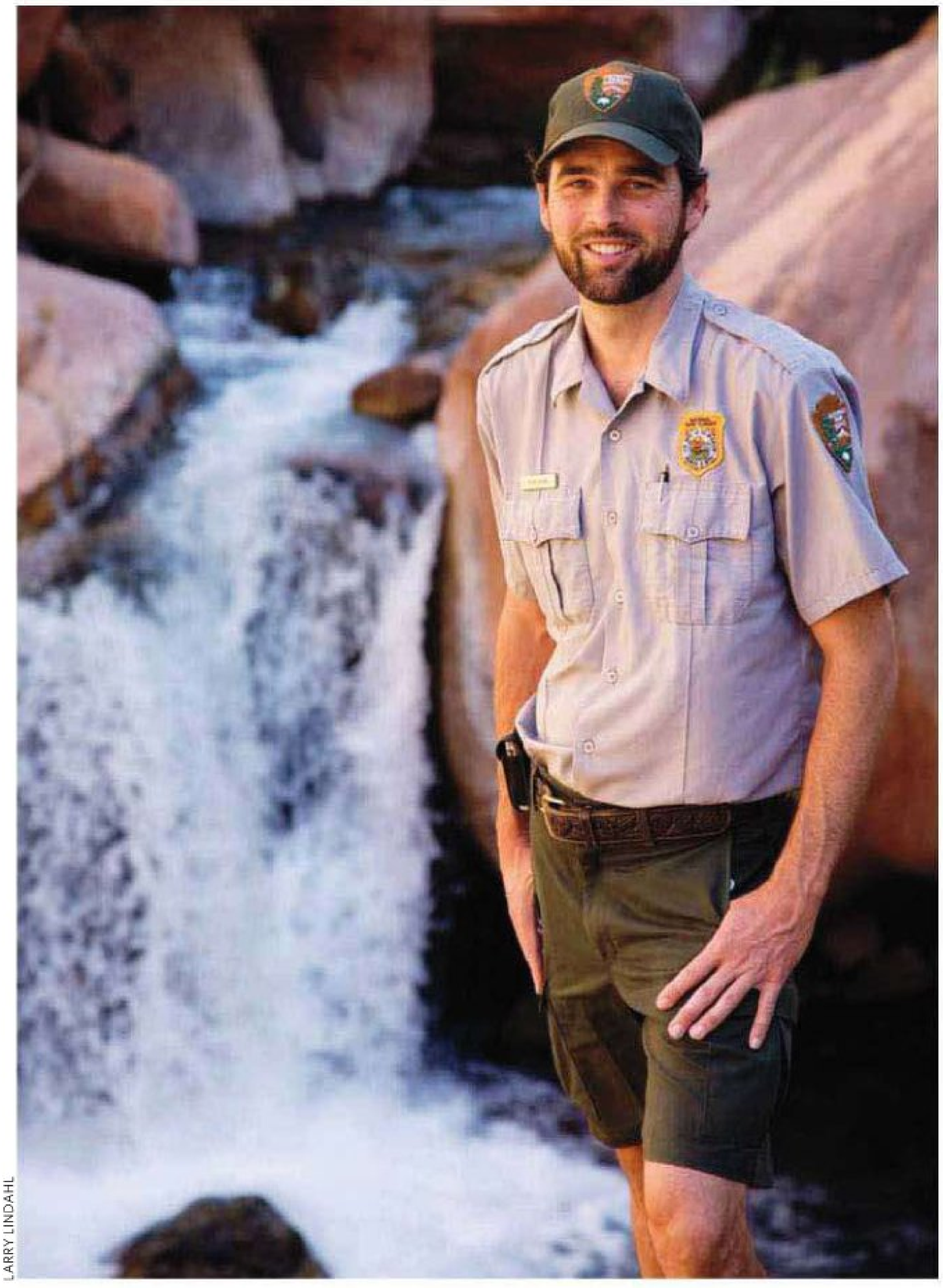

LARRY LINDAHL

Family Business

Artist Bruce Aiken is a legend at the Grand Canyon. His paintings brought him acclaim, and so did his 33-year tenure as caretaker of the Roaring Springs pump house. Although he retired in 2006, his son, Silas, is carrying on the family tradition.

By KATHY MONTGOMERY

SILAS AIKEN INTRODUCES HIMSELF to a group of hikers who have stopped to rest at a picnic table near his ranger station.

GRAND CANYON

"Where are you from?" Silas asks.

"San Diego," answers one hiker.

"You?"

"Here, actually," Silas says.

The hiker nods, assuming, perhaps, that Silas means that he's from Arizona. But when Silas says he's from here, he means it literally. He grew up *inside* the Grand Canyon, just a few feet from this very spot. The house that now serves as Silas' ranger station, 5.5 miles from the North Rim of the Grand Canyon, also happens to be his boyhood home.

Silas' parents, Bruce and Mary Aiken, moved into the Grand Canyon 5 years before Silas was born. Bruce, now well-known for his Canyon paintings, worked for the Park Service as caretaker of the pump house at Roaring Springs, which supplies water to the facilities in the national park. For 33 years, Bruce spent every April through November in what was the caretaker's home until he retired in 2006. Silas is the youngest of the three kids Bruce and Mary raised there.

These days, the pump is automated, and the house is the part-time residence of two park rangers who work alternating weeks to oversee the house, a nearby campground and the steady stream of hikers who stop by to fill up on water.

On this August day, the hikers arrive in a wave. Most are headed to Phantom Ranch along the river, having traveled that morning to the North Rim via shuttle. Silas pushes sunglasses up over dark, curly hair and answers questions with the ease of someone who grew up there.

The banter feels easygoing, but serves a serious purpose. It's what the Park Service calls P-SAR, preventive search and rescue. By far, the most common injuries in the Canyon are heat-related. It's part of Silas' job to help prevent those injuries. The banter merely serves as prelude to the message he delivers like an evangelist: "Drink plenty of fluids and try not to hike during the hottest part of the day," he says. "That's the most important thing."

"See you next time," he says, and heads back to the house, moving with the long, loose strides of the high-school basketball player he was. On his way back to the ranger station, he passes the basketball hoop he and his dad installed in 1994. He hasn't used it for a while. His "court," a cottonwood-shaded clearing, needs work. "Some mules came through here," he says, smiling.

But that doesn't mean he doesn't think about basketball. As head basketball coach of Grand Canyon High School, Silas admits that some days, it's all he thinks about.

Back at the ranger station, Silas dons a wide-brimmed straw hat and begins to cut the lawn with an electric Weed Eater.

"It's either this or a dull push mower," he says with a shrug, adding that he's pretty sure it's the same mower he's seen in a photo he thinks dates to the 1950s. "Down

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here it's a different world, you know? You can't just go to The Home Depot."

Bruce planted the grass Silas is cutting in 1979 after the current house was built. The helicopters that delivered supplies created so much wind that the dirt was forever blowing into the house. The lawn provided dust control. But gardening was also Bruce's passion. He manicured box elders along the helipad and planted Virginia creeper along the porch. A hedge of irises he transplanted from the original caretaker's house, since demolished, still blooms bright yellow in spring. A yucca Bruce planted from a seed now stands taller than the house.

For a time, the house sat unoccupied. When Bruce and Silas came back to visit for a couple of days in June 2009, they found the whole yard overgrown.

"We ended up doing yard work the whole time," Silas says. "I realized that someone needs to be here. That's when the clouds kind of parted and I realized this is where I'm supposed to be."

Silas took a leave of absence from the job he held for 7 years as a physical education teacher in Mesa and asked to volunteer at the house. He served as a volunteer for one summer. The Park Service hired him the following year.

With forgotten memories lurking around every corner, Silas says working in his childhood home is "weird and surreal and good." He describes his childhood as "like Huck Finn's," but with cool parents. Mostly home-schooled until he was in the fifth grade, Silas spent days swimming in Bright Angel Creek and catching trout with his hands, listening to Dodgers games on an AM radio and playing baseball with his dad. He inherited his dad's love of the game, and took up basketball by default after he outgrew the only baseball offerings on the South Rim.

At night, the family played cards or invented games. There was a lot of music. To this day, all three Aiken kids are musical. The family also entertained a steady string of guests, a mix of friends and distressed hikers. The conditions created a close-knit, gregarious clan.

Back at the picnic table, groups of hikers assemble and reassemble.

One remembers "the guy who lived here a long time."

"I never met him," he says. "But I met his son."

"That was me," Silas says.

"Really? That was you? No kidding," the hiker says, brightening. "What was it you were selling? Gatorade?"

"Lemonade," Silas answers.

"Right, lemonade. I do miss the lemonade."

"I miss the lemonade myself," Silas says.

Later, a hiker asks Silas about his schedule. Silas explains that he lives here 8 days before hiking out for 6.

"It's almost like your place then," he says.

"Yes," Silas agrees. "Almost."

BRUCE AIKEN

In the 1980s, Silas Aiken enjoyed swimming near his boyhood home in the Grand Canyon.

PRATT'S

Q&A

Scott MacIntyre

Former *American Idol* Contestant

How has Arizona influenced your music?
One time I wrote a song about living out in the boondocks with cactuses, because when I first moved to North Scottsdale, there was nothing up there. Now it's developing so fast. I love coming back here after traveling around the world because it's one of the only places I can really come back to and write new songs, record and just focus on music. Most of my new album, *Heartstrings*, was written and recorded here.

Which Arizona landmark would you vote for as the next *American Idol*?
I'd say Pinnacle Peak. Whenever I have a day off, I love hiking it to get some exercise. It's great to get out in the open air and get above the city. The diversity of hiking in Arizona is something you can't experience anywhere else.

If you were trying to impress Simon Cowell, where would you take him for lunch?
I'd take him to Greasewood Flat in Scottsdale, and give him a taste of some real Arizona cowboy fare.

How do Arizonans compare to the people you've met while traveling with *American Idol*?
They're amazing. There's quite a spirit of enthusiasm when it comes to music, whether it's the jazz scene or the local celebrity scene. I always feel the most welcome here. I look forward to performing many more concerts in Arizona.

— Dave Pratt is the author of *Behind the Mic: 30 Years in Radio*

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BRENDAN MOORE

What's Mine Is Yours

Everything you ever wanted to know about mining is yours to explore at Robson's Guest Ranch near Wickenburg. There are horses, too, but this isn't your typical dude ranch.

By JACKI MIELER

THERE ARE ENTIRE MUSEUMS dedicated to Arizona's mining history, and then there's Robson's Guest Ranch. It's part antique treasure trove and part dude ranch, but all of Robson's is a tribute to the industry that helped build the state.

Nestled in the hills of the Sonoran Desert 20 miles west of Wickenburg, Robson's occupies a former mining camp that shut down at the start of World War II. The Robson family purchased it in 1979, complete with all of the original mining equipment. They re-created the camp, adding their own impressive collection of antiques, gathered from travels around the world. Fifty years after the mining operations ceased, Robson's Mining World opened to the public for tours in 1992.

WICKENBURG

When Western Destinations took over in fall 2009, they began implementing a new vision. While the museum-quality artifacts and antiques weren't touched, they transformed this former day-trip destination into a complete guest-ranch experience — an experience that gives visitors an inexplicable desire to rush into town for a pair of cowboy boots.

The 26-room lodge offers basic, comfortable rooms free from modern distractions like telephones and televisions. An upgrade to one of four suites rewards guests with private balconies that feature unobstructed views of the cholla "teddy bear" cactuses that dominate the desert landscape. For guests with technology withdrawals, there is a common room stocked with games, movies and a pool table.

Even those who believe they're averse to the lure of antiques will be engaged by the self-guided tour of the artifact-filled buildings. Most items are out and begging to be touched, making Robson's more like grandma's house than a stuffy museum. Highlights include the original miners' cabins and a mercantile filled with midcentury clothes, shoes, food and other everyday items.

Hitting the trail on horseback seems the most natural way to explore the scenic hills surrounding Robson's. Guided tours on friendly horses meander past desert flora, which blooms in all its glory in the spring. Swiss military Pinzgauer vehicles take guests on off-road adventures, offering glimpses of the mine shafts in the hills and an opportunity for visitors to try their hands at skeet-shooting. Those who prefer to remain on their own two feet have access to miles of trails starting right on property.

You can learn about Arizona's mining history in a museum, or you can put on your new cowboy boots and live the mining experience at Robson's.

Robson's Guest Ranch is located at Mile Marker 90 on Rural Route 1 near Wickenburg. For more information, visit www.robsonsminingworld.com.

ONLINE | For more lodging in Arizona, visit www.arizonahighways.com/lodging.

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Weather or Not

Winter is a great time to make photos in Arizona, but the skies are capricious and careful planning is necessary. Do your homework, though, and your images can be as beautiful as the landscape.

By JEFF KIDA, photo editor

DEREK VON BRIESEN

The West Fork of Oak Creek near Sedona.

DEREK VON BRIESEN LIKES to work in challenging conditions. "Winter conveys a sense of peace and quiet," the photographer says. "In Arizona, winter weather is capricious, and you have to shoot during a storm or shortly thereafter. You have a very short window, so you have to previsualize the image." From studying weather forecasts to deciding where to park, von Briesen takes everything into consideration. "You have to think about keeping yourself and your batteries warm, you have to make sure you use a waterproof camera pack and have some kind of traction on your shoes." But he believes the outcome is worth the extra effort. "Winter scenes possess a lot of emotional content that's very compelling. The solitude, starkness, isolation ... there's a certain mystery and melancholy," he says. "I think the images speak to people about their own experiences of winter."

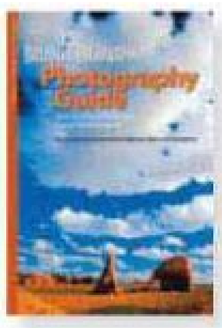
MAINTAINING YOUR BALANCE

Because of the highly reflective nature of snow, shooting winter scenes can present a number of challenges. The most common are exposure and white balance. If you're out in the field and see that your winter whites are looking more like dingy grays, try using the exposure compensation button (+/-) on your camera and set it to overexpose by at least one f-stop (+1).

Photo Tip

JEFF KIDA

You might need to fine-tune this, so check your histogram. Snow reflects everything around it, including the blue sky. The best way to correct color is to shoot in RAW, but if you're locked into JPEG capture, try setting your white balance to "open shade" or "cloudy." Either of these will help get the blue out.



ADDITIONAL READING: Look for our book, *Arizona Highways Photography Guide*, available at bookstores and www.arizonahighways.com/books.

ONLINE

For more photography tips, visit www.arizonahighways.com/photography.

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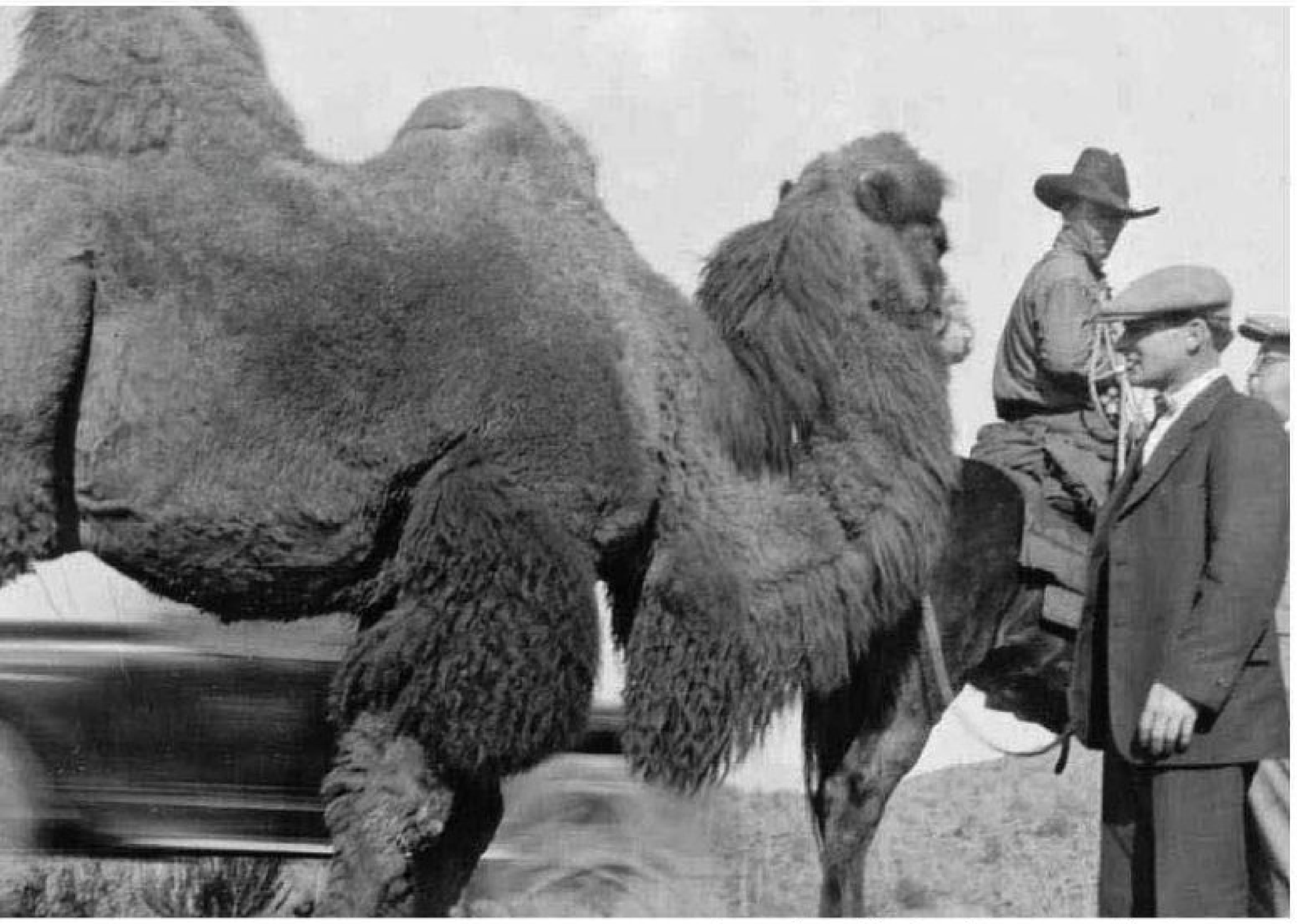


ARIZONA STATE LIBRARY

Descendants of the Camel Corps were said to have roamed the Southern Arizona deserts until the early 20th century.

Hump Days

Although horses and mules carried most of the load in the Old West, there was a time, in the mid-1800s, when camels were used as well, and the man in charge was a guy named Hi Jolly.

By SALLY BENFORD

DESERTS AND CAMELS ARE a likely pair, but in the mid-1800s, the humpbacked mammals were as foreign to the Arizona desert as humpbacked whales. That is, until the United States Army decided to experiment.

Before the Civil War, westward expansion was a challenge in terms of travel and transporting goods. Back then, horses and mules were the main beasts of burden, and watering holes were few and far between, meaning that transport by horse- and mule-drawn wagons was slow going.

QUARTZSITE

But in 1856, Secretary of War Jefferson Davis came up with a novel solution: camels. Under Davis' orders, two shipments of camels traveled from the Middle East to the American Southwest. Along with the animals came camel herders, including Hadji Ali, who became known in the United States as Hi Jolly.

Around the same time, Army Lieutenant Edward Fitzgerald Beale was appointed to lead a survey team and build a wagon route through Arizona, from Fort Defiance to the Colorado River along the California border. Beale used 25 camels as transport animals while building the 1,000-mile-long road, and Hi Jolly served as the camels' chief handler. During the expedition, Beale was impressed with Hi Jolly, and also with the camels' ability to carry much heavier loads than horses or mules. What's more, they could travel farther with less food and water. In his official report, Beale wrote, "My admiration for the camels increases daily with my experience of them."

But not everyone was enamored with the animals. The horses and mules were terrified of the camels, and the soldiers didn't know how to handle the unfamiliar beasts that would kick and spit their cud with exceptional accuracy. Still, the outfit dubbed the "Camel Corps" was deemed successful, thanks to the camel-whispering skills of handlers like Hi Jolly.

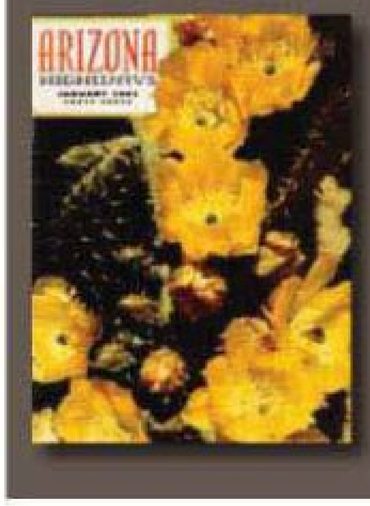
By 1861, with the Civil War looming, the camel experiment essentially died, and in 1864, the Army auctioned off the remaining camels to zoos and circuses. For a few years, Hi Jolly cared for some of the camels, and he worked with the Army as a mule packer, guide and scout until he settled in Quartzsite, where he prospected until his death in 1902.

Lost to history for many years, the legend of Hi Jolly and his camels was resurrected in 1934, when the Arizona Department of Transportation erected a monument over the herder's grave in Quartzsite. This month, visitors can pay tribute to one of the Old West's most colorful pioneers during the town's Hi Jolly Daze celebration.

For more information about Hi Jolly Daze, call 928-927-6159 or visit www.quartzsitetourism.com.

This month in history

- The January 7, 1891, edition of the *Prescott Weekly Journal-Miner* called for a railroad to be built through the Bradshaw Mountains, thus allowing the mines in the area, such as the Crown King Mine, to operate year-round.
- A strong earthquake rocked Apache County on January 16, 1950, leaving several cracks in the ground near the small town of Ganado. The cracks, a half-inch wide and almost 12 feet long, extended in a north-south direction near the Hubbell Trading Post.
- On January 25, 1934, Tucson police detectives managed to do what federal agents couldn't. They captured gangster John Dillinger after a fire broke out at the Hotel Congress, where he and his gang members were hiding out.



50 years ago IN ARIZONA HIGHWAYS

In anticipation of spring, our January 1961 issue focused on the beauty of desert wildflowers. The colorful portfolio was accompanied by a story about The Orpheus Club of Phoenix, one of the country's most-respected male chorale groups.

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photo flashback

Lawn Gone

For more than 60 years, the sign along State Route 89A read: "Don Hoel's Cabins. In the Heart of Oak Creek." In 1945, Don and Nita Hoel purchased a small group of tourist cabins in Oak Creek Canyon and welcomed visitors to vacation beside the creek. In addition to running the cabins, the couple began collecting kachinas, baskets, rugs and jewelry crafted by Navajo, Hopi and Zuni Indians, and eventually opened a shop near their resort. Over the years, thousands of families have stayed at Hoel's while fishing, hiking and exploring the area. Although the cabins closed in 2006, Hoel's Indian Shop still offers visitors fine Indian arts and crafts, as well as a glimpse at the past. *Information: 928-282-3925 or www.hoelsindianshop.com.*

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PAUL MARKOW

Lodge Between the Past and Present

When it comes to iconic restaurants in Arizona, El Chorro Lodge ranks right up there. Recently, the old adobe got a facelift, and things are better than ever. Including the sticky buns.

By MARYAL MILLER

IN THE EVER-EXPANDING METROPOLIS of Phoenix, Arizona, traces of the state's storied past are often overlooked and rarely preserved. This writer even came close to downloading *Rawhide* on iTunes and hijacking a kid's stick-horse just to feel an authentic link to long ago. Thanks to El Chorro Lodge, which was recently revamped and reopened, that wasn't necessary. The restaurant is getting rave reviews, and best of all, despite the recent overhaul, the rustic refuge hasn't lost an ounce of its stylish, Southwestern charm. Or its famous sticky buns.

Shortly after being sold to Valley philanthropist Jacquie Dorrance by longtime owners Joe and Evie Miller, El Chorro was handed over to celebrated architect Mark Candelaria. That was in June 2009. In February 2010, he handed it back with a refreshed look and a new chef. "Visiting El Chorro is like coming home again," Dorrance says. "We didn't want to change that feeling by unveiling an entirely new menu. Instead, we infused the menu with some unique new dishes."

PARADISE VALLEY

Translation: Gone are some ultravintage menu mainstays such as shad roe and chateaubriand, but still around are the ever-so-tender mesquite-grilled rack of lamb (a customer favorite) and Australian lobster tail, in addition to fresh, contemporary dishes like tomato-and-burrata salad and Santa Fe chicken enchiladas.

If you're a longtime regular, don't let the changes keep you away. The lodge still houses the famed Classroom Bar, an abundance of hair-on-cowhide rugs and leather club chairs, and many original art pieces, fireplaces and light fixtures. Of course, a few modern enhancements *were* made — c'mon, the place became an eatery 73 years ago, decades before *The Food Network* was born and Americans started worrying about cholesterol.

Among the changes, the blue-emblazoned patio with its stunning views of adjacent Camelback and Mummy mountains was expanded to almost three times its original size. A new boccie lawn and organic vegetable garden were created. The Classroom Bar now houses plasma-screen TVs. And an airy new indoor/outdoor bar was added to the entryway. In addition, El Chorro is in the process of becoming LEED Gold certified, complete with solar panels. Yes, El Chorro has gone green!

Regardless of the brick, mortar and menu, what makes this adobe landmark so special is the people who pass — and have passed — through the door. People like Jacquie Dorrance, who is dedicated to preserving El Chorro's history. People like Clark, Milton, Barry and the Phoenix 40 who sipped scotch and socialized in El Chorro's dimly lit corners. People like Steve Nash, who charmed a *Sports Illustrated* reporter at the bar during a hometown interview. And the people yet to come — future generations of families celebrating engagements and graduations, and toasting with signature El Chorro Sunrises in hand.

El Chorro is located at 5550 E. Lincoln Drive in Paradise Valley. For more information, call 480-948-5170 or visit www.elchorrolodge.com.

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Hop, Skip & Jumpers

The Easter Bunny and Roger Rabbit aren't the only interesting *leporidae* around. Meet *Sylvilagus audubonii*, the desert cottontail. He's part cunning, part cute and plenty fluffy.

By KELLY KRAMER

It's hard to think for too long about cottontails without *Here Comes Peter Cottontail* popping into your head. That is, if you grew up with a mother whose musical taste runs from Gene Autry to Gene Simmons, but that's beside the point.

In the Southwest, desert cottontails can be seen hopping down a bunch of bunny trails, particularly in near-desert grasslands and, occasionally, in piñon or juniper forests. You might even see them at sunrise and sunset in your very own yard, nibbling on grasses, as well as a variety of other plants, including some cactuses. Interestingly, desert cottontails don't require much water and often survive on quick drinks of morning dew or water from the plants they eat.

Indeed, their vegetarian diet keeps desert cottontails relatively small, although they can grow up to 17 inches in length and weigh up to 3 pounds. Ears and feet make up much of their petite frames, with ears measuring around 4 inches long and feet registering at 3 inches in length. Female cottontails are typically bigger than their male counterparts, an uncommon characteristic among other species.

Such a small stature helps the rabbits avoid predators — a very good thing, considering they have many. From bobcats and coyotes to big birds of prey, it seems that something's always picking up a cottontail. Or, rather, something's always "trying" to pick one up. Thanks to zigzag running patterns and top speeds of 19 mph, rabbits do have a fleeting chance. If running away doesn't do the trick, they've also been known to pummel their predators with a series of kicks.

When it comes to making baby bunnies, cottontails can produce several litters a year, especially if their food supply is abundant and the climate is cooperative. Young rabbits are born aboveground or in shallow burrows and are completely helpless. In most cases, they won't leave the nest until they're 3 weeks old. As they mature, desert cottontails tend away from social burrow networks, which is common among many other rabbit breeds. That's not to say, however, that they're antisocial — you'll commonly see desert cottontails getting hippity-hoppity with one or two other rabbits.

TOM BEAN

nature factoid

BRUCE D. TAUBERT

Great Scotts

With lemon-yellow bodies and black wings, Scotts orioles are easy to spot on desert hillsides across the Southwestern United States and Mexico. In fact, you'll often find them where you'll find yuccas, as the pretty songbirds drink nectar from the plant's flowers, forage for insects on its leaves and weave nests from its fibers — all while whistling happy, high-pitched songs.

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DEGRAZIA GALLERY IN THE SUN

DeGrazia Exhibition

JANUARY 21-31 TUCSON

Artist Ted DeGrazia had dual passions for music and art. A year-long exhibition at DeGrazia Gallery in the Sun features his paintings of musicians, as well as the complete collection of oil paintings from his 1945 University of Arizona Master of Arts thesis that explored the relation of music and color. Visitors will also see sketches and photographs of the artist. *Information: 520-299-9191 or www.degrazia.org.*

Museum Tours

JANUARY 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 FLAGSTAFF

Each Saturday, as part of the Weekend Guided Tours program, get an in-depth look at the Museum of Northern Arizona's collection of artifacts focused on the Colorado Plateau and the people who live there. The museum houses nearly 5 million objects in its anthropology, biology, fine art and geology collections, all of which are featured on the tours. *Information: 928-774-5213 or www.musnaz.org.*

CRAIG SMITH

Jesse Monongye Exhibition

JANUARY 1-31 PHOENIX

Jesse Monongye's complex jewelry expresses traditional elements from his Navajo and Hopi heritage in contemporary gold and silver. The Heard Museum exhibition, *Jesse Monongye: Opal Bears and Lapis Skies*, features more than 200 pieces by the artist and his principal mentors, father Preston Monongye and famed Hopi jeweler Charles Loloma. Best known for his inlaid bears, Monongye's work also captures the celestial night skies and other imagery. *Information: 602-251-0213 or www.heard.org.*

BARRETT-JACKSON

Barrett-Jackson Auction

JANUARY 17-23 SCOTTSDALE

Each January, the world's top car collectors call Scottsdale home during the Barrett-Jackson Collector Car Auction, which celebrates its 40th anniversary this year. The 2010 event featured nearly 1,200 collector vehicles that went on the block during the weeklong auction, bringing in $68 million. This year, high rollers, celebrities and car buffs will cruise the grounds of WestWorld to bid on more than 1,000 rare and unique vehicles. Cooking demonstrations, fashion shows, wine tastings and gourmet food offerings are also included. *Information: 480-421-6694 or www.barrett-jackson.com.*

Photo Workshop

January is a great time to photograph the Grand Canyon. The cool, crisp air provides crystalline light, and shorter daylight hours create longer shadows, which can lead to dramatic images. Snow may blanket the stunning landscapes of the Canyon, and the opportunities to photograph wildlife are optimal. Join photographer Peter Ensenberger for the "Winterscapes at the Grand Canyon" photo workshop, January 15-17. *Information: 888-790-7042 or www.friendsofazhighways.com.*

Wings Over Willcox

JANUARY 12-16 WILLCOX

This 4-day birding and nature festival in Southeastern Arizona draws visitors from around the world. The event includes a nature expo, photo and birding workshops, bird-watching, geology and history tours, and free seminars on birding, astronomy and more. This year's keynote speaker is Scott Waldensaul, who will present *Of a Feather: A (Brief) History of American Birding*. Participants should register in advance. *Information: 800-200-2272 or www.wingsoverwillcox.com.*

BRUCE D. TAUBERT

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GETAWAYS

Unless you're agoraphobic or tied to the couch, literally, there's no good reason not to explore Arizona. The Grand Canyon State is bursting with adventure ops, and there's something for everyone, including houseboating on Lake Powell, whitewater-rafting on the Salt River and horseback-riding in Cold Water Canyon. If none of those get you going, keep reading, we've got more.

BY JODI CISMAN, JoBETH JAMISON, KELLY KRAMER, MARYAL MILLER, KATHY MONTGOMERY & ROBERT STIEVE

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WHITE-WATER-RAFTING

Upper Salt River

Whitewater-rafting is not for the faint of heart. Nor is it for people who hear the phrase "Splash Zone" at Sea World and run screaming for the car. Nor is it for people who care more about their hair and makeup than they do about anything else. In other words, hair-sprayed, freaked-out people need not apply.

Whitewater-rafting *is* for people who like a little bit of speed, a surge of adrenaline and water. Lots of water. Canyon Rio Rafting is staffed by people who fit that criteria. People like "Scratchy," a guide who's part comedian and part rugged boatman. The company's one-day whitewater tours of the Upper Salt River Canyon are geared to people who fit that bill, too.

When you arrive at Canyon Rio's Salt River hub — a trailer located in a parking lot shared with other outfitters just past the Salt River Canyon bridge, northeast of Globe — you'll meet your guides and fellow adventurers, then get fitted for a wetsuit and personal flotation device. You might think you look like a sausage in a floatie, but you'll be grateful for the suit once the first rush of water smacks you in the chest. After a safety briefing, you're ready to hit the water.

Flanked by cactus-and-brush-covered granite cliffs, the river runs between the San Carlos and Fort Apache reservations, and, depending on the melting White Mountains' snowpack that feeds the river, rapids range between Class III and Class V. After a particularly wet and snowy winter, the river ran at a rate of 65,000 cubic feet per second at its peak in the spring of 2010. That means if you were to pick a point on the river's bank, the equivalent of 65,000 basketballs would bounce past that point in a single second.

Heed the rowing commands of your guide and you won't have to worry about becoming a basketball yourself. "Forward two," "back one," "stop." The commands are that simple. Pretty soon, you'll be amazed by how quickly you're bounding through the water, encountering rapids with names like Grumman, so-called for the famed boat manufacturer. Some rapids are bigger and choppier than others, and some are a bit calmer, inspiring only mild gasps and plenty of opportunities to enjoy the amazing scenery that surrounds you.

Mid-trip, you'll disembark at the guides' camp — a funny, modern-hippie slice of rugged habitation — where you'll be treated to lunch à la Scratchy and crew, including hamburgers, veggie burgers, hot dogs and all the fixings. After you get your fill, it's back into the raft for the remainder of the trip, and that might include a little bit of surfing. Yes, surfing.

It's not surfing in the headed-to-Malibu-in-my-vintage-Woody sense of the word. Rather, you'll help turn the raft against the current, then sideways, resulting in the sensation of surfing. It's exciting, just like the rest of the trip, and a fabulous end to your whitewater journey. Or maybe it's just the beginning.

— *Kelly Kramer*

Information: Canyon Rio Rafting, 800-272-3353 or www.canyonrio.com
In the Neighborhood: Irene's Real Mexican Food, Globe, 928-425-7904; Show Low Historical Society Museum, 928-532-7115 or www.showlowmuseum.com; Besh-Ba-Gowah Archaeological Park, Globe, 928-425-0320

PRECEDING PANEL AND BELOW: Rafters navigate Class III rapids on the Upper Salt River, taking advantage of spring runoff. PHOTOGRAPHS BY JEFF KIDA

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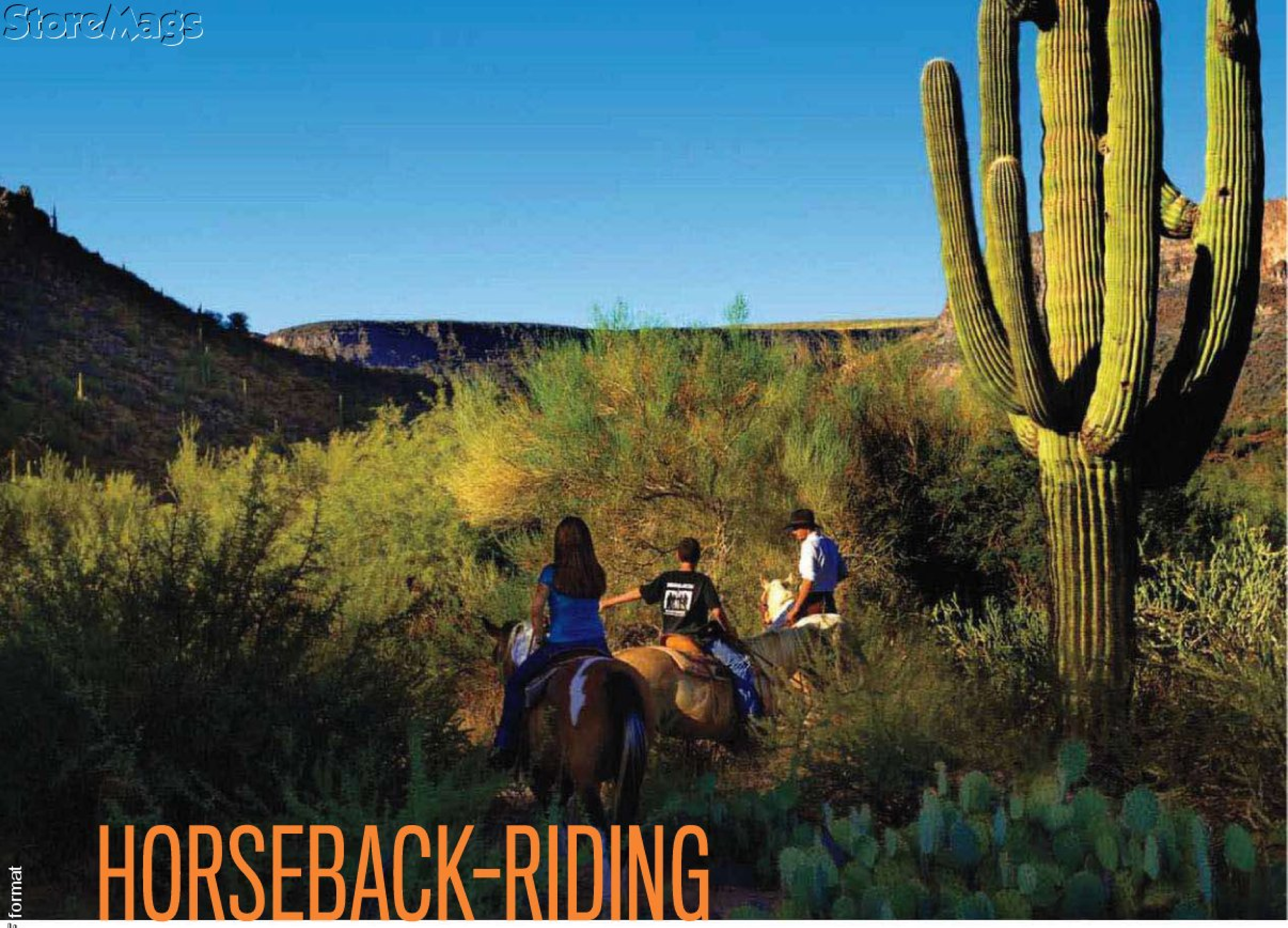

HORSEBACK-RIDING

Canyon Creek Ranch, Black Canyon City

Canyon Creek Ranch's horseback tours provide up-close views of the Sonoran Desert. PHOTOGRAPH BY J2 PHOTO PRODUCTIONS

There was a time, not so long ago, when getting from Point A to Point B in Black Canyon required a long day, a sturdy horse and a well-stocked saddlebag. Today, it takes about 20 minutes in the driver's seat of a Toyota Sequoia. One option isn't better than the other, but if you subscribe to the gospel of Will Rogers, who once said, "There is nothing better for the inside of a man than the outside of a horse," you'll want to park the Toyota at Canyon Creek Ranch.

The ranch, which sits on 130 acres in nearby Cold Water Canyon, is located about 20 miles north of Phoenix. It's close, but not too close. More importantly, it's surrounded by the spectacular topography — rugged hills, volcanic rock, desert flora — of Agua Fria National Monument. As a whole, the area is one of the least-visited and most-spectacular areas in Arizona.

Like the early days, the only sensible way to explore the canyon is on foot or on the back of a horse. If you're tired of walking, the wranglers at Canyon Creek can set you up with a number of different guided horseback tours, which are suitable for just about everyone — including 6-year-old nieces named Ava.

"I loved it," Ava told her uncle. "And I wasn't scared one bit, not even when we crossed the river. All I could think was, 'This is very fun.'"

The horses, which follow the lead of the wrangler, take riders from the corral into the lush Sonoran Desert, where the trail winds past saguaros, paloverdes and mesquite trees, and over the Agua Fria River. Although there are several other horseback outfitters in Arizona, this one gets high marks because the entire ride takes place out in the wilderness — there's no urbanization in sight.

Another thing that sets Canyon Creek Ranch apart is its Old West town, which is a replica of what you might have seen in episodes of *Bonanza* or *Gunsmoke*. In addition to gunfights and other Wild West entertainment, the town features a saloon, complete with cowboy grub and cold drinks, as well as hands-on activities such as ax-throwing, pistol-shooting and steer-roping. (If you're a vegetarian, don't worry, there aren't any heavy-breathing bovines in town. Instead, the steer-roping is done with a good-sized hay bale that sports a well-worn set of longhorns.)

The cowboy kitsch is great for kids, especially kids who spend most of their time watching DVDs in the backseat of a Toyota Sequoia, but the best part of the adventure is the trail ride itself. The desert landscape is beautiful, the wranglers are entertaining and there's nothing better for the inside of a man — or a niece — than the outside of a horse.

— *Robert Stieve*

Information: Canyon Creek Ranch, 623-374-5245 or www.westerndestinations.com
In the Neighborhood: Rock Springs Café, 623-374-5794 or www.rockspringscafe.com; Agua Fria National Monument, 623-580-5500 or www.blm.gov/az; Arcosanti, 928-632-7135 or www.arcosanti.org

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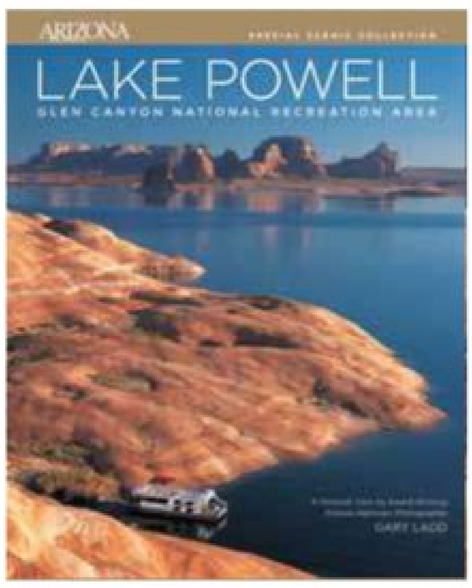
HOUSEBOATING

Lake Powell Resorts & Marinas, Lake Powell

"Lake Powell: America's Newest Playground."

That was the headline on the cover of the January 1964 issue of *Arizona Highways*. It was the first of many times the great lake would be featured in this prestigious magazine. In that first occurrence, Editor Raymond Carlson, the godfather of *Arizona Highways*, wrote: "Glen Canyon! Remote, lonely and hauntingly beautiful, was known to ancient people, to the Navajos, to a few early day explorers, and then in modern times to a few hardy and adventuresome river enthusiasts. The mighty river flowed on and on through the silent canyon. To harness the strength of that river, a dam was built in Glen Canyon, and just last spring a lake began to form behind the dam."

That "playground," now almost 50 years old, has become one of Arizona's most popular destinations, and for good reason: It's gorgeous. From the towering red-rock sandstone cliffs and picturesque canyons to the brilliant blue-green water and beautiful sandy beaches, Lake Powell is a panoramic postcard. Although Glen Canyon was regarded as one of the most amazing canyons in the Southwest, Lake Powell is astounding as well, and it's the epitome of a weekend getaway.



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1. On your iPhone, download the application called Quickmark (for the Droid, download ScanLife).
2. Launch the application and position the barcode within the viewfinder on your phone — it'll automatically connect you to more information about our book.

Lake Powell had been on the drawing board for years, but it was born on October 1, 1956. That's when President Dwight D. Eisenhower pushed the button that ignited the first charge of dynamite used in the construction of Glen Canyon Dam. With that one simple act, the once quiet wilderness now known as "the place no one knew" became a 24-hour construction zone dominated by cranes and concrete and Brobdingnagian Tonka trucks.

It would stay that way until March 13, 1963, when high-pressure gates in the left diversion tunnel were partially closed and the Colorado River began backing up, thus forming the first few drops of Lake Powell. Of course, it wasn't much of a lake in the beginning. In fact, it would be another 17

The 75-foot *Excursion* sits anchored in Kane Wash Canyon, near Cookie Jar Butte. PHOTOGRAPH BY GARY LADD

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"Stuff your eyes with wonder … live as if you'd drop dead in ten seconds. See the world. It's more fantastic than

ABOVE: Sunset at Lake Powell paints shades of scarlet on Gunsight Butte at Padre Bay.
PHOTOGRAPH BY GARY LADD

years before the lake would hit its high-water mark on June 22, 1980. Even today, that mark (3,700 feet above sea level) is considered "full pool," which isn't likely to occur again anytime soon.

Because of the drought that's plagued the West for more than a decade, the lake is a lot lower than most people would like. At press time, according to the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, Lake Powell was down approximately 62 feet from the high-water mark. Prior to the drought, which began in September 1999, the lake was at 97 percent of capacity. That number, however, dropped all the way to 33 percent in April 2005.

A few wet winters have helped reverse the trend, at least temporarily, and now Lake Powell is at 64 percent of capacity. Even though that's a long way from full, there's plenty of water to keep a houseboat afloat, and, in case you've never been, a houseboat is the ultimate way to experience Arizona's world-famous water park.

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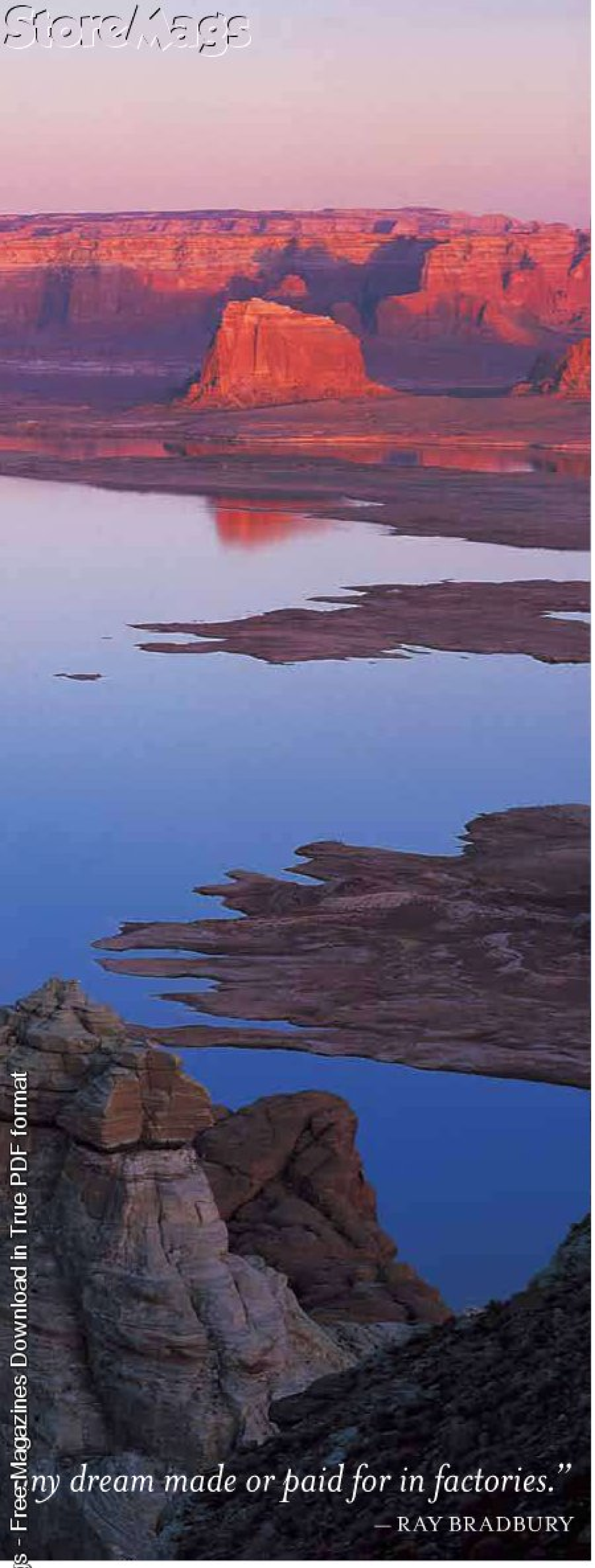

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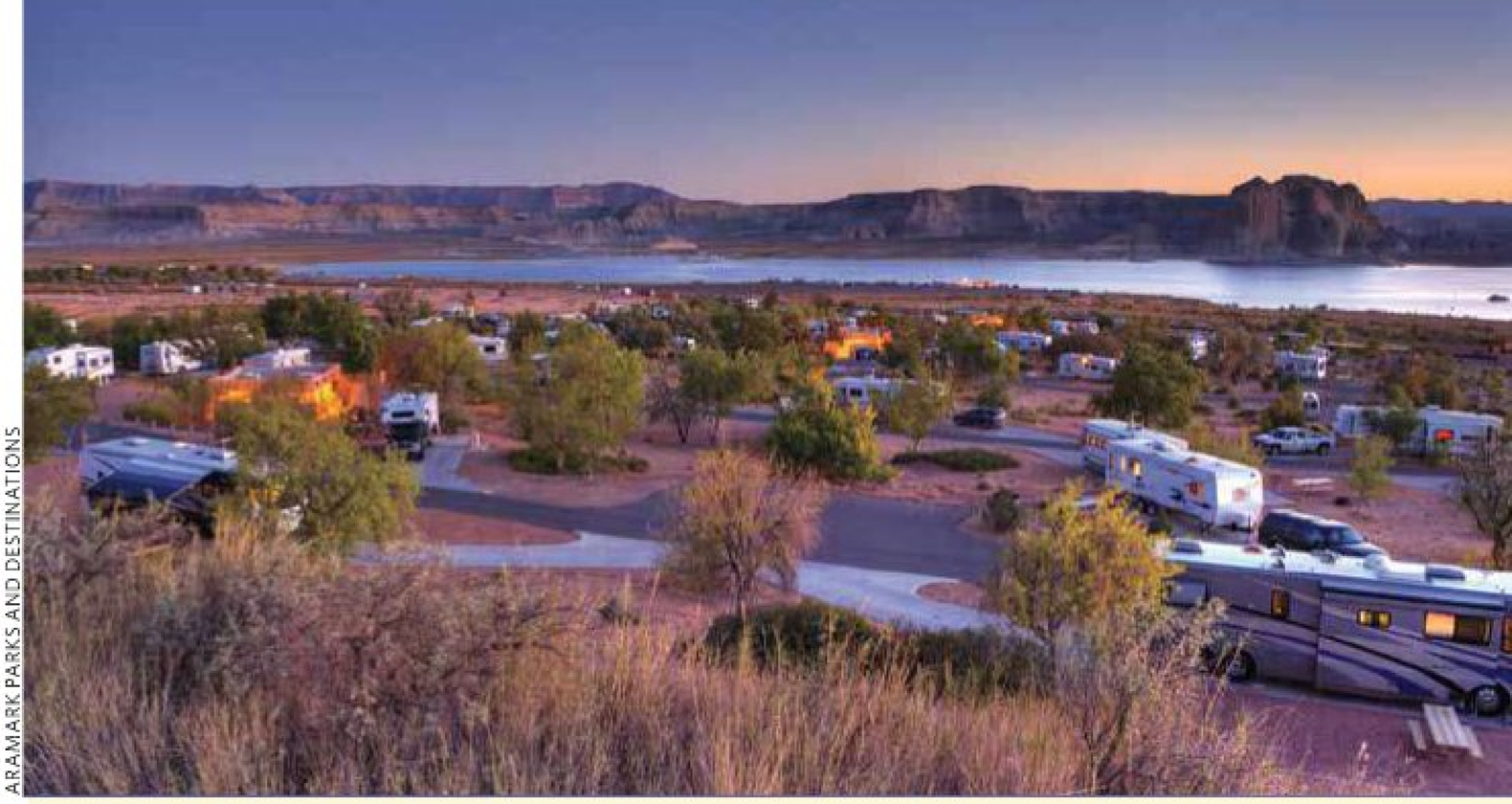

ARAMARK PARKS AND DESTINATIONS

A Site for Sore Eyes

Although Lake Powell is best explored from the upper deck of a houseboat, day trips are an option as well — Lake Powell Resorts & Marinas rents powerboats, Jet Skis, kayaks and other water toys. If you go that route, you'll need to crash at Wahweap Marina, which means staying at the Lake Powell Resort or securing a site at the adjacent campground. If you're pulling an RV, there are 139 full hookup sites and 60 pull-through spaces. Each site includes a picnic table, charcoal grill and/or fire pit, among other things. There's even free Wi-Fi. In addition, Wahweap RV Park & Campground offers 112 tent/self-contained RV sites. With the lake as a backdrop, there aren't any bad sites, but the best bet is site No. 26. Situated at the top of a hill overlooking the bay, the views are second-to-none — it's definitely a site for sore eyes. Information: Lake Powell Resorts & Marinas, 888-896-3829 or www.lakepowell.com

Anytime is a good time to be on Lake Powell. The summer is prime time, but spring is great too because the crowds are thinner and the daytime highs are like those in San Diego — in April, the average high is 71 with lows in the mid-40s. Naturally, the water's a little too cold that time of year for anything other than getting your feet wet, but you'll have the lake to yourself. Figuratively. Whenever you go, winter, spring, summer or fall, getting to the lake is easy.

From Flagstaff, the route heads north across the Navajo Nation, hops over Glen Canyon Dam just past Page, and ends at Wahweap Marina, which is where you'll pick up your houseboat and probably spend the first night — although it's not necessary, it's a good idea to crash at Lake Powell Resort when you get there, that way you can get an early start the next day. Another option is the Wahweap RV Park & Campground (see sidebar, above).

Before you roll in, though, you're going to want to stock up on the four basic food groups, along with cold beverages, paper towels, Oreos, more cold beverages, several bags of Cheetos ... whatever floats your boat. If you forget something, the marinas on the lake have some limited supplies, but nothing like what you'll find at Trader Joe's or Safeway. If a grocery list for a week on a houseboat seems a little overwhelming, don't worry, the folks at ARAMARK, the concessionaire that manages Lake Powell Resorts & Marinas (and also rents the houseboats), will give you a list of what to pack. You'll be glad they did, because it's easy to forget things like garbage bags, bug spray, extra blankets and bottle openers.

Once you're at Wahweap, the southernmost of the five marinas on the lake, you'll be given an hour-long lesson on how to operate the boat, and what to do if things go wrong. Despite the tutorial, you'll probably walk away thinking: *That's it? I'm pretty sure I know less about boating than Gilligan, and yet they're giving me the wheel to a 15-ton monster that makes the one in Loch Ness look like Flipper. Did he even tell me which side is starboard? How do I turn this thing on? Oh god!*

Nevertheless, that's how it works. You load your booty onto the boat, climb into the captain's chair and start chugging upstream. By the way, because Lake Powell is fed by the Colorado River, there *is* a current, which, if you're not properly anchored, would eventually drag you to the top of the 710-foot Glen Canyon Dam. It's not likely, but you should keep that in mind. Of course, if you do start drifting, you'll have plenty of time to get things turned around — the lake is big and so are the houseboats.

They range in size from the 46-foot *Expedition* to the 75-foot *Excursion*, with a handful of other sizes in between. Any one of them will work, but if "roughing it" goes against your better judgment, the *Excursion* is the way to go.

With five staterooms, this 928-square-foot luxury liner comfortably sleeps 12.

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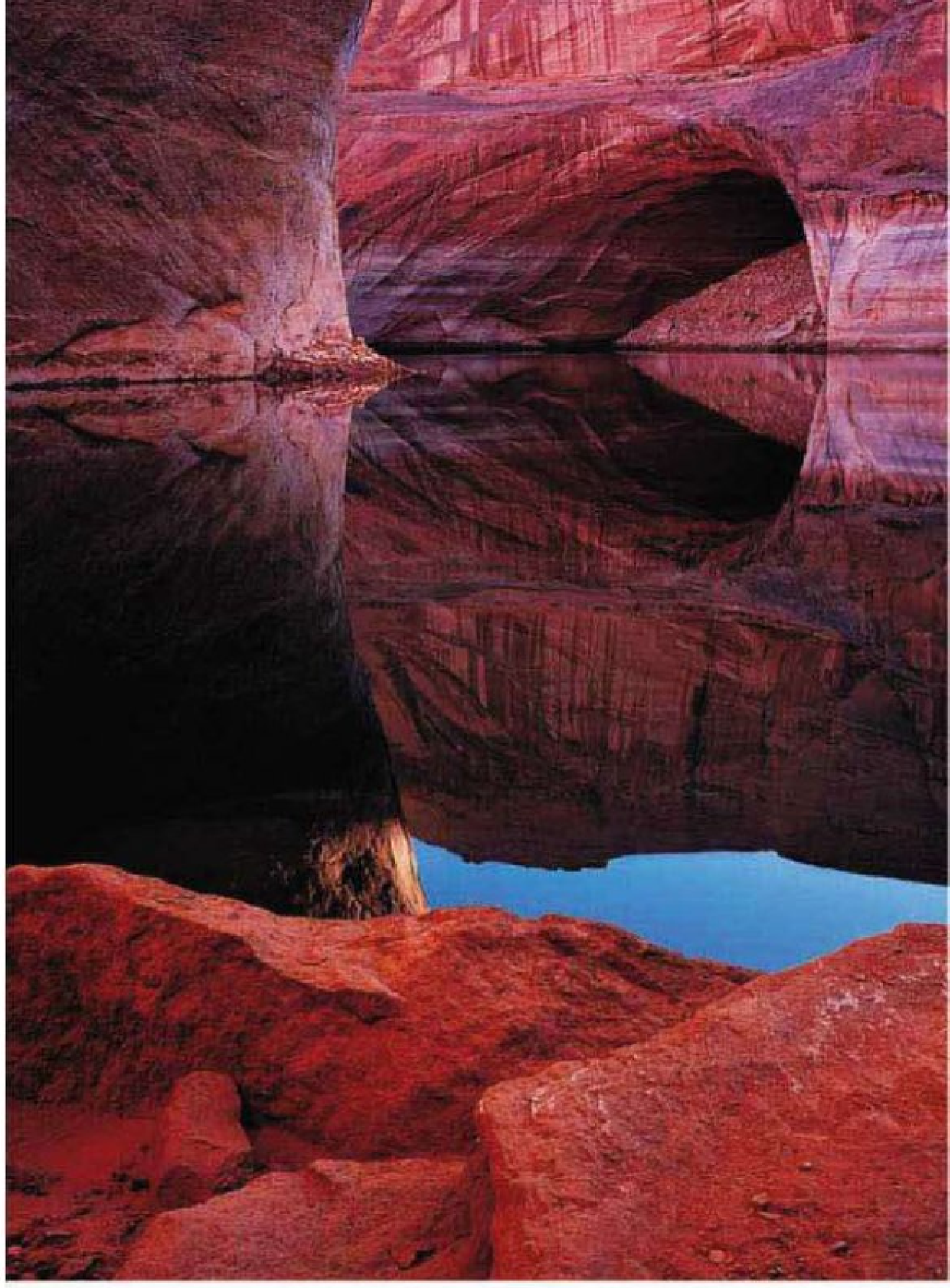
When you're not in the land of Nod, there are all kinds of amenities onboard to make you feel at home, including a hot tub, a fireplace, a waterslide, a wide-screen TV and home theater system, two barbecue grills, an auto-tracking satellite system, and a wine cooler that holds up to 24 bottles of Cabernet, or whatever wine suits your fancy. Central air and a full kitchen make the *Excursion* feel even more like home. That is, until you look out the window — the combination of Mother Nature and more than 21 million acre-feet of water makes Lake Powell one of the most visually intoxicating places on Earth.

The Glen Canyon National Recreation Area was established in 1972 to protect hundreds of thousands of acres straddling Northern Arizona and Southern Utah. The centerpiece of the national park is Lake Powell, which is named for John Wesley Powell, the one-armed Civil War veteran who explored the Colorado River back in 1869. Long before he showed up, though — about 11,000 years earlier — native tribes known as Desert Archaic people roamed the canyon. They liked it there, and stuck around for a while. Then, several millennia later, around A.D. 1050, the Anasazis moved in and built their marvelous cliff dwellings, most of which were submerged with the creation of the lake.

Although the Spaniards and Mormons also explored the area, it was J.W. Powell who shared Glen Canyon's beauty with the rest of the world. Of course, he wouldn't recognize it today, with the exception of Rainbow Bridge, which stands as the largest natural bridge in the world. Like everything else associated with the lake, Rainbow Bridge is big. Very big.



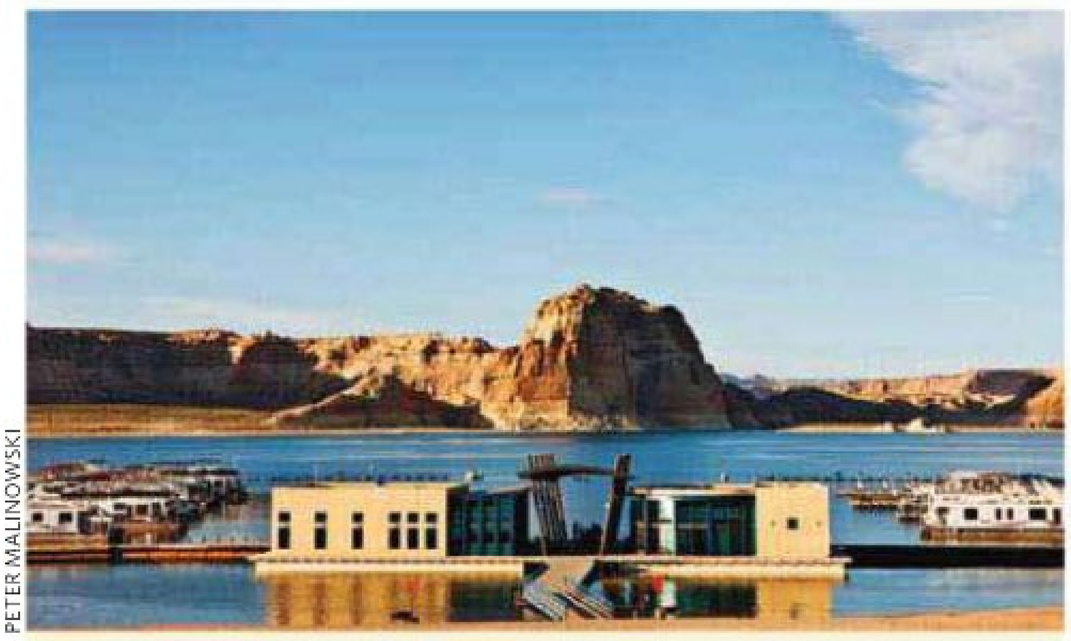
A yawning alcove looms over Lake Powell in Willow Canyon. PHOTOGRAPH BY GARY LADD

In all, it rises 290 feet above the riverbed below — about the same height as the Statue of Liberty — and spans 275 feet across. When the lake is full, boats can cruise almost to the base of the bridge. When it's not, a short hike (1.5 miles round-trip) is required. It's worth it, though. As you'll see, Rainbow Bridge is the lake's premier sideshow, but it's not the only site worth seeing.

In fact, one of the best things about Powell is exploring the lake's 1,900 miles of shoreline and 96 side canyons. But you don't want to use the houseboat for that. Instead, you'll want to dock the big boat on a beach somewhere and use a powerboat for cruising around. They're faster, cheaper and much easier to maneuver — the houseboats go less than 10 mph and guzzle about 1.5 gallons of gas per mile. Powerboats, along with Jet Skis, kayaks and other water toys, are available for rent at Wahweap, and can easily be towed behind the mother ship.

It's a good system, and it's the way you'll spend most of your time on Lake Powell. Like the man for whom the lake is named, exploration is the real reason you're there. As you head out, however, remember that even though there are five marinas, there's a lot of lake in between them, and no matter how beautiful the red rocks and blue-green water can be, the last thing you want to do is run out of gas in the middle of nowhere. And there's a lot of nowhere on Lake Powell, which makes it an ideal "playground" for anyone wanting to hop off the grid. Nevertheless, being nowhere with no gas would be a real drag. Plan ahead, have a safe trip and don't forget the Cheetos.

— *Robert Stieve*



PETER MALINOWSKI

Lodging: Lake Powell Resort at Wahweap Marina offers 350 rooms, and Wahweap RV Park & Campground offers 139 full hookup sites and 60 pull-through spaces, as well as 112 tent/self-contained RV sites. Lodging facilities are also available at Hite, Halls Crossing and Bullfrog marinas. For more information, call 888-896-3829 or visit www.lakepowell.com.
Houseboat Rentals: Houseboat rentals vary in price depending on boat size and length of stay. The 46-foot *Expedition*, for example, runs $1,698 for 5 days, while the 75-foot *Excursion* is $10,595 for 7 days. Powerboats and other water toys can be rented by the hour, day or week. For specific prices and special rates, call 888-896-3829.
Information: Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, 928-608-6404 or www.nps.gov/glca; Lake Powell Resorts & Marinas, 888-896-3829 or www.lakepowell.com; Rainbow Bridge National Monument, 928-608-6200 or www.nps.gov/rabr

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The Country Shop in Tubac offers a wide selection of Mexican pottery.
PHOTOGRAPH BY EDWARD McCAIN

EXPLORING TUBAC

Southern Arizona

There are three things you'll learn about Tubac when you visit: 1) It's a real place, not just a dot on a map; 2) it's the epitome of an artist's town; and 3) there's a little something for everyone, whether you like to eat, shop or explore art galleries.

If you've never been, Tubac is an easy place to pass when you're driving up or down Interstate 19, but if you have some time to spare, you won't regret a stop. Better yet, make it a destination — with only three meals in a day, you'll want more time to try every restaurant, bistro and café on the town map.

There's plenty to choose from. Cafés and delis line the streets. If you're looking for a light meal, grab a hot dog or panini at The Snack Bar Gallery and eat while surrounded by amazing local art. Or, enjoy free Wi-Fi, a cup of joe and freshly made pizza at the Tubac Deli & Coffee Co. If Mexican is your cuisine of choice, head to Wisdom's Café, which is run by three generations of the Wisdom family. Don't be fooled by the giant chicken statues that stand guard at the entrance; the food is anything but foolish — even if you only order an original, mango or strawberry margarita, which the menu promises will "knock your socks off." And don't forget a devilish seasonal fruit burrito à la mode.

When you aren't wiping the drool from your chin, explore the more than 30 art galleries in Tubac. The artwork ranges from Southwestern (Hal Empie Studio) to pottery (Clay Hands Gallery & Studio) to wrought-iron sculptures (Karin Newby Gallery & Sculpture Garden). In Tubac, you not only have a chance to purchase original artwork, but you can also watch the artists hard at work on their masterpieces, and they're more than willing to answer any questions you might have about the pieces in their studios.

In addition to burritos and pottery, another option in Tubac is a game of golf at the Tubac Golf Resort & Spa. The historic Otero Ranch sits on 500 acres and features 98 guestrooms, a 27-hole championship golf course, spa, salon and restaurant that is "great for couples, singles and families," according to Cristella Lopez, the resort's groups coordinator. By the way, movie fans might recognize the resort as the primary setting for the Kevin Costner film *Tin Cup*. After spending a weekend in Tubac, you'll be able to tell your friends and family that it is, in fact, a real place, not just a dot on the Arizona map. And your impression of the tiny town will evolve from "that easily missed place along the highway" to an enormous, living, breathing piece of communal art that has been carefully crafted over the decades by one-of-a-kind people who bring truth to the town's tagline: "Where Art and History Meet."

— Jodi Cisman

Information: Tubac Chamber of Commerce, 520-398-2704 or www.tubacaz.com
In the Neighborhood: Tubac Golf Resort & Spa, 1 Avenue de Otero, 520-398-2211 or www.tubacgolfresort.com; The Snack Bar Gallery, 2221 E. Frontage Road, Suite E102, 520-370-1556 or www.laentradadetubac.com; Tubac Deli & Coffee Co., 6 Plaza Road, 520-398-3330 or www.tubacdeli.com; Wisdom's Café, 1931 E. Frontage Road, 520-398-2397 or www.wisdomscafe.com; Hal Empie Studio, 33 Tubac Road, 520-398-2811 or www.halempiestudio-gallery.com; Clay Hands Gallery & Studio, 5 Camino Otero, 520-398-2885 or www.clayhands.com; Karin Newby Gallery & Sculpture Garden, 19 Tubac Road, 520-398-9662 or www.karinnewbygallery.com

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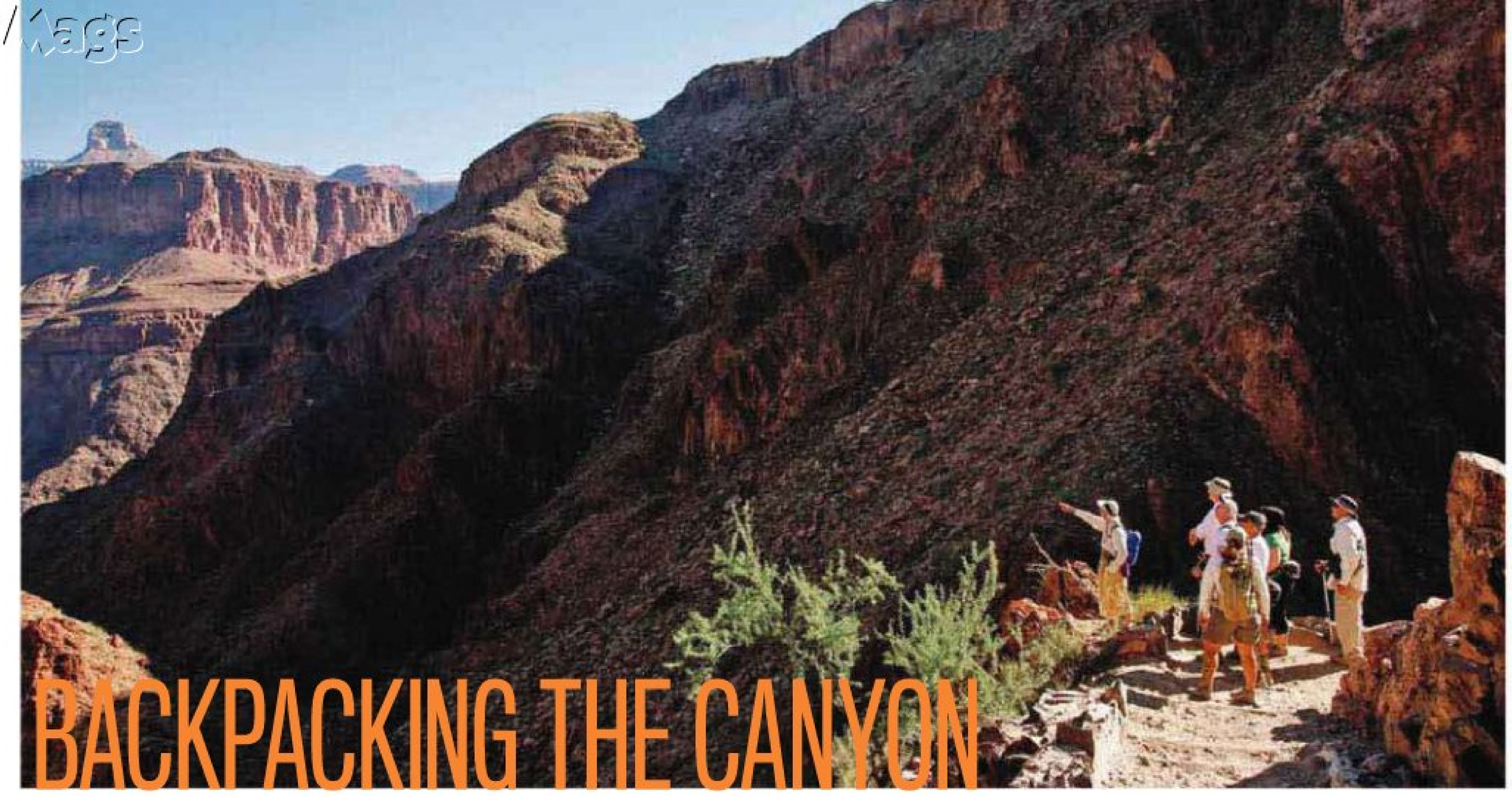


BACKPACKING THE CANYON

Grand Canyon Field Institute, South Rim

Standing at sunset on the edge of Plateau Point, past and present stretch out before me. Trilobite tracks, formed 525 million years ago, lay imprinted in the Tapeats sandstone beneath my feet. During this introductory backpacking class, my classmates and I have, in a way, stepped back in time.

Nowhere do the layers of time stand more exposed than here at the Grand Canyon. Yet the Canyon retains some mysteries. Time twists in unexpected ways. There are unexplained gaps in the geologic memory.

"Right above is the Supergroup," explains "Slim" Woodruff, our Grand Canyon Field Institute instructor. "The older rock is above the Tapeats. That's called an unconformity."

Tomorrow, we'll rest our backpacks on the Great Unconformity, in which a billion years of geologic time is missing.

"There's Zoroaster," Slim says, pointing out her favorite formation. At nearly every stop during our 3-day trek, Slim places the formation like a navigational star.

From there, we can also see our immediate past and future. Lights from the South Rim, which we left this morning, twinkle above us. Below us lies the Devil's Corkscrew, an imposing bit of trail we'll tackle tomorrow. Farther below, the Colorado River, normally green, appears to be the color of chocolate milk.

After hiking 4.5 miles with a full pack, I feel almost giddy. My classmates chatter happily and take turns snapping photos of each other.

"Give me some attitude," Marty goads from behind a pocket-sized camera.

Elaine, watching a cliff swallow dive and swoop, jokes, "He wouldn't be so spry if he had to walk down here."

As the sun slides below the Canyon rim, I wander off to sit by myself. Taking in the layers of geologic time, I wonder how I will stack up.

We silently reassemble as the stars begin to emerge. Lying on our backs, we pick out the Big Dipper, Cassiopeia, Scorpio. The Milky Way stretches overhead like a veil.

Finally, as if on cue, we rouse tired bodies and head back to camp, our headlamps winking in the dark like a secret code.

Over the course of 3 days, we hike 22 miles between the South Rim and Phantom Ranch, camping for 2 nights at Indian Garden. Slim teaches us a little of everything: backpacking, history, archaeology, geology. We ford cottonwood-shaded creeks and traverse a slot canyon lined with evening primroses and monkeyflowers. We pass mines and visit historical structures. We play on a sandy beach. Along the way, we glimpse mule deer, a comically defensive baby kingsnake, the tail end of a bighorn sheep. Slowly, I begin to understand the pull of the Canyon.

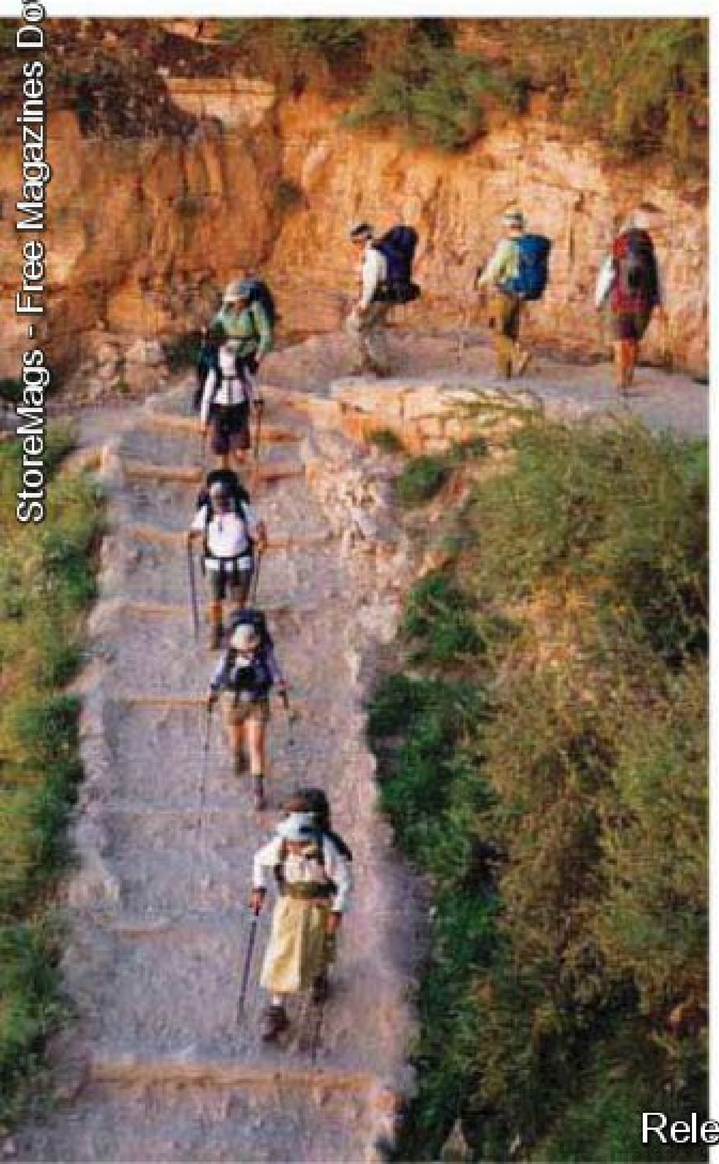
"It was worth any effort to get here," says Ron, who has already decided to come back.

Hiking out on the last day, photographer Larry Lindahl and I debate formations and geologic layers, and what our favorites say about us. A kind of "which tree would you be?" game.

I considered the possibilities. Would I be strong as Vishnu schist? Permeable as Kaibab limestone? Graceful as Coconino sandstone? In the end, I can't decide. And maybe I don't need to. My own path has yet to be set in stone.

— Kathy Montgomery

ABOVE AND BELOW: Backpackers make their way along the Grand Canyon's Bright Angel Trail. PHOTOGRAPHS BY LARRY LINDAHL



Information: Grand Canyon Field Institute, 866-471-4435 or www.grandcanyon.org/fieldinstitute
In the Neighborhood: El Tovar, 888-297-2757 or www.grandcanyonlodges.com; Cruisers 66 Café, Williams, 928-635-2445 or www.cruisers66.com; Grand Canyon Caverns, Seligman, 928-422-4565 or www.gccaverns.com

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HOPI RESERVATION ADVENTURE

First, Second & Third Mesas

While on my tour of the Hopi Reservation, also known as a Hopi Lands Tour, our group was taken to a small house on First Mesa to buy *piki* bread (traditional, pastry-thin sheets of blue-corn and wood-ash batter cooked over a hot fire). I giddily bought one of the few remaining plastic-wrapped rolls.

Souvenir mission: Accomplished.

"You're lucky," said a fellow traveler, eyeing my bluish burrito-looking find. "You live here. You can always come back for more."

My face went red, like the countless locals at a Phoenix travel expo who confessed that they'd never been to the Grand Canyon. *Yes, but I haven't been here since I was 8 years old!* This was almost as rare an adventure for me as it was for someone from Ohio or California. And like all great adventures that I've ever put off, I wish I'd done it sooner.

Surrounded by the Navajo Nation, the scenic Hopi Reservation consists of three mesas, which house several different pueblo-style villages, including Orayvi (also known as Old Oraibi) and Walpi, two of the oldest continuously inhabited villages in North America.

While the Hopis may share access roads and some modern-day symbiosis, their predominantly patriarchal, clan-oriented culture and heritage is very different from that of their Navajo neighbors. The Hopis are so old school, they're ahead of the new global curve. They live minimally, some without running water or plumbing. In protest of hovering power lines, some villages have very happily gone solar. And instead of using irrigation systems, the Hopis are dry-farmers who rely on the seasonal rains to water such crops as squash, melons and corn, a very important cultural staple.

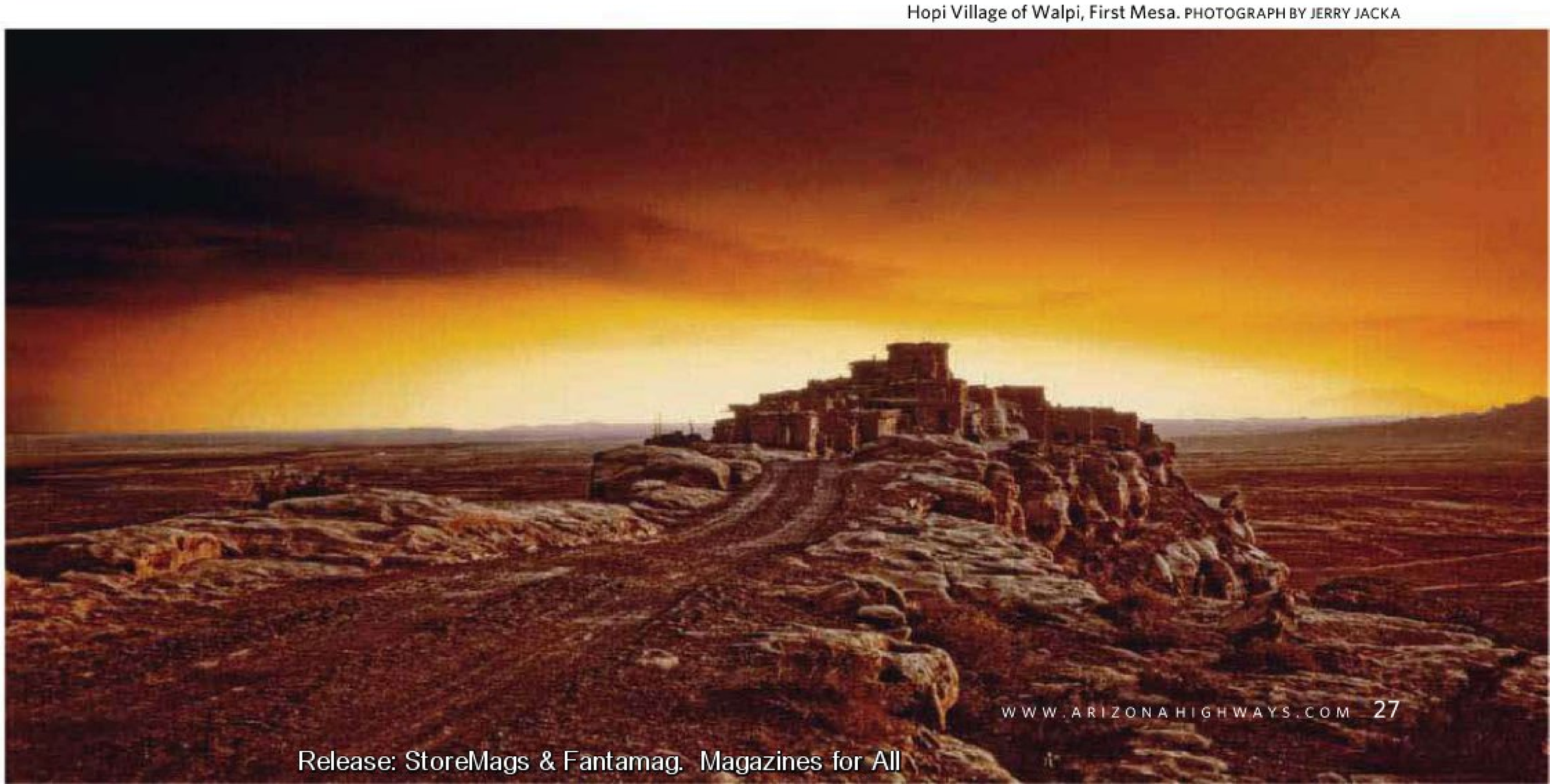
The Hopi mesas are the land of kachinas — spirit dolls hand-carved from the roots of cottonwood trees. Authentic kachinas can be purchased from reputable dealers around the state, but there's nothing quite like meeting the artist in person as he (or she, if you're on First Mesa) puts on the finishing touches and warmheartedly offers the meaning behind each intricate detail, sometimes right from their own home. The Hopis are also known for their impeccably handcrafted baskets, pottery and *dawas* (suns), as well as their elaborate Katsina costumes, which are worn during special events and celebrations.

While there are several Hopi events that are open to the public — seasonal ceremonies that are usually held on Second Mesa — the Hopis are very protective of their culture and tribal land. Photography is prohibited and, in some places, even sketching and note-taking are not permitted. Certain areas are not accessible to the public without a certified native guide, while other areas are not accessible at all. Unless you are Hopi, self-guided tours are ill-advised. Your best bet for the full experience is a guided tour with a reputable company.

— *JoBeth Jamison*

Information: Great Ventures Tours, 928-282-4451 or www.greatventures.com
Travel Advisory: While bargaining is acceptable, Hopi crafts still fetch a handsome fee. There are a couple of accredited stores that take credit cards, but home and street vendors do not, so cash is highly recommended if you're there to buy. Kachinas and pottery vary in quality and craftsmanship for the price, so shop around. Be respectful of the culture and observe all signs and rules.
In the Neighborhood: Standin' on the Corner Park, Winslow, www.standinonthecornerpark.com; La Posada Hotel & Gardens, Winslow, 928-289-4366 or www.laposada.org; Clear Creek, Winslow, 928-289-5714

Hopi Village of Walpi, First Mesa. PHOTOGRAPH BY JERRY JACKA



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BIPLANE TOURS

Red Rock Biplane Tours, Sedona

Red Rock Biplane Tours' plane soars over the Red Rock/Secret Mountain Wilderness. PHOTOGRAPH BY KERRICK JAMES

"This is how they used to do it in the good old days," James, your trusty pilot, yells over his shoulder as you exit the terminal and walk toward the big red biplane that awaits on the Sedona Airport tarmac. It's a typical beginning to one of Red Rock Biplane Tours' biplane excursions.

After strapping on a soft, vintage flying helmet, you'll step up onto the wing and climb into the front seat. Although you might be contemplating an escape, James is as cool as *Top Gun*'s Maverick pulling a 3-G negative dive in a thunderstorm at night. That said, if heights give you the hives, you might want to ride the pine on this one.

As you weave down the runway in the single-engine, open-cockpit biplane, memories of the steep ascent you trekked to reach the *U.S.S. Sedona* (the nickname Sedona Airport picked up for its long, narrow battleship shape as seen from the air) will undoubtedly re-enter your consciousness. The airport sits atop a towering mesa that overlooks the city, and you're about to fly straight off the end of its runway into the wild blue yonder. At some point, logic prevails. Planes fly in and out of there all day, every day, and as James assures you via the headphones in your helmet: You're about to embark on the aviation adventure of a lifetime.

Once you're airborne, James narrates with a continuous stream of landmark identification. For the first half of the 20-minute flight, you'll listen anxiously as you pass over Cathedral Rock, Courthouse Butte, the lush Coconino National Forest, colorful Oak Creek Canyon and the Mogollon Rim. You'll spot Thunder Mountain and catch a rare glimpse of the sprawling Enchantment Resort hidden inside

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"Adventure is worthwhile in itself." — AMELIA EARHART

Boynton Canyon. But as the ride begins to steady and your nerves settle, calm consumes you and the euphoria of gliding freely above the red rocks temporarily puts James' voice on mute. Relax and enjoy the ethereal breeze and the warm sun on your face — peace this perfect is hard to come by with two feet on the ground.

One of the most exquisite sightings on your journey, one that only a bird's-eye view like this can showcase properly, is an impressive outcropping of red rocks just past Lee Mountain called the "Merry-Go-Round," so named for its circular configuration. Simply put, the view from above is extraordinary. Then, as you zoom tightly between, and fly shoulder-to-shoulder with Sedona's highest ridges, you'll learn that sharks' teeth can be found on many of the plateaus in the area — the daggers were left behind by an ocean that covered the area some 320 million years ago.

All too soon, it's time to return from whence you came. But this time you'll strut across the tarmac with some swagger in your step and the hum of *Danger Zone* running through your brain.

— *Maryal Miller*

Information: Red Rock Biplane Tours, 888-866-7433 or www.sedonaairtours.com
In the Neighborhood: Enchantment Resort, 800-826-4180 or www.enchantmentresort.com; Palatki Heritage Site, 928-282-4119 or www.fs.fed.us/r3/coconino/recreation; Fournos restaurant, 928-282-3331

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The sun shines a lot in Arizona — about 90 percent of the year, compared to 30 percent in Juneau, Alaska. Although most Arizonans will tell you they love the sun, there's a universal vibe of excitement and relief when the clouds roll in. Because it happens so rarely, we sent a photographer into the outdoors during a recent wave of inclement weather. We thought it would come in handy the next time you're sick of the sun.

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A PORTFOLIO BY LARRY LINDAHL

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A PORTFOLIO BY LARRY LINDAHL

Preceding panel: Threatening clouds hover above Schnebly Hill and the brilliant red rocks of Mitten Ridge near Sedona.

Right: Snow covers the landscape and fog shrouds soaring rock formations as water flows through Bear Wallow Creek in the Coconino National Forest.

Below: Icicles hang from ponderosa pine boughs in the upper reaches of Boynton Canyon.

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"From wonder into wonder existence opens." — LAO TZU

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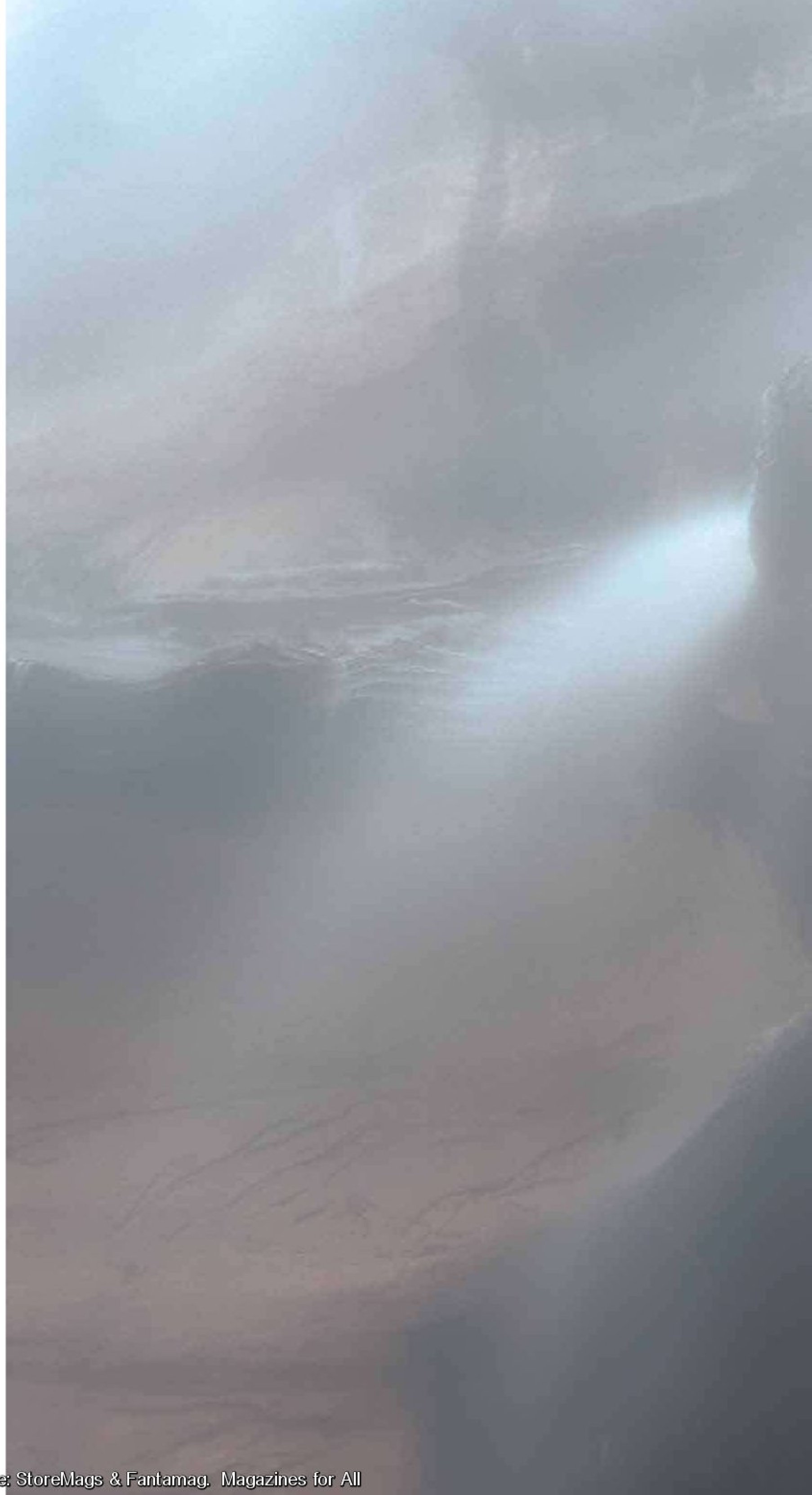
A PORTFOLIO BY LARRY LINDAHL

"Observe the wonders as they occur around you. Don't claim them. Feel the artistry moving through and be silent."

— JALAL AD-DIN RUMI



Mist, caused by storm-fed runoff, obscures Oak Creek as it rushes over boulders along its course through Boynton Canyon.

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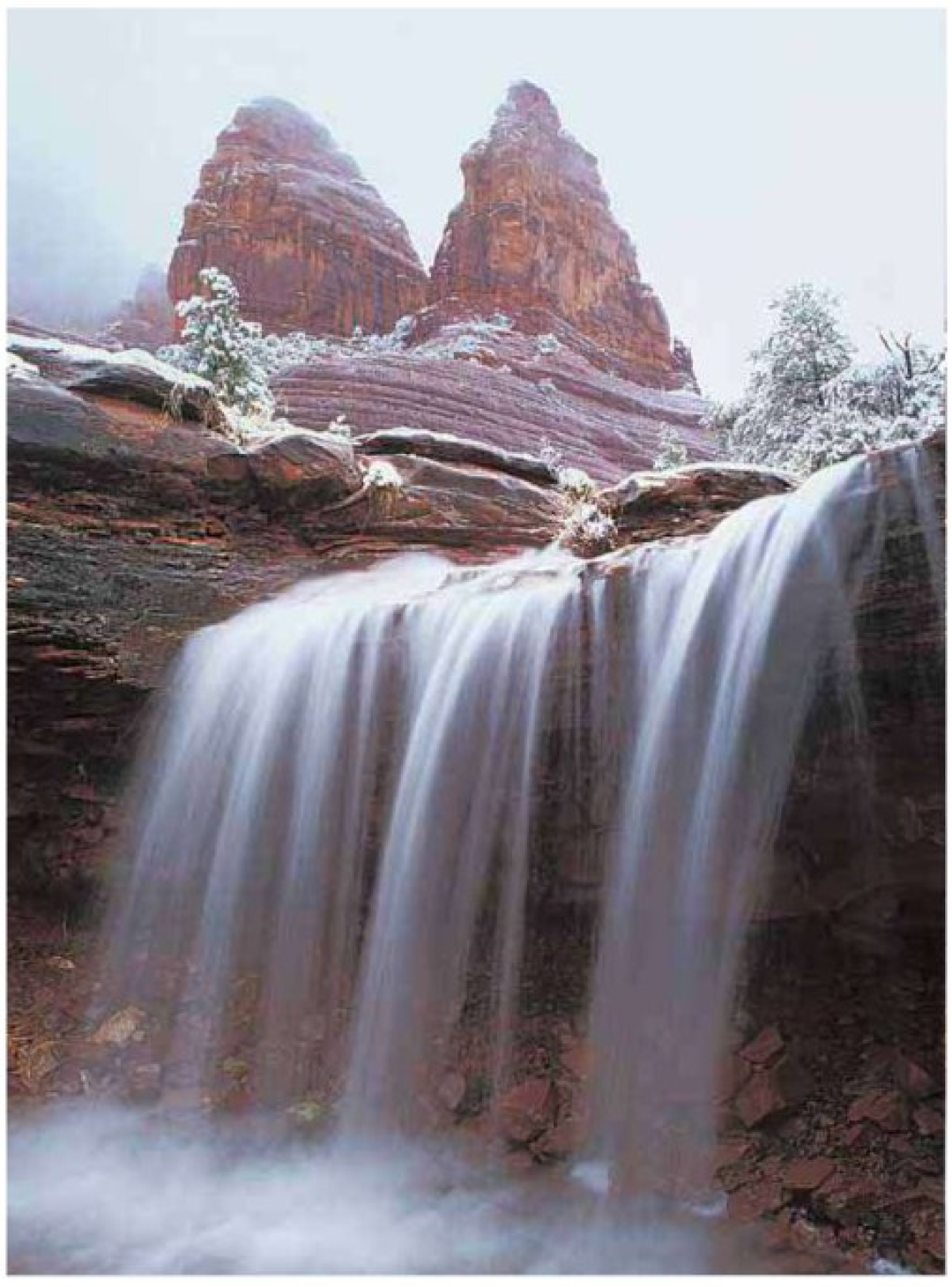
A PORTFOLIO BY LARRY LINDAHL

"Nature is full of genius,
full of the divinity;
so that not a snowflake
escapes its fashioning hand."

— HENRY DAVID THOREAU

Left: Capitol Butte seems to play a game of hide-and-seek with passing clouds after a snowstorm in Coconino National Forest.

Below: An ephemeral stream turns into a lovely waterfall as it flows over slickrock during a late-season winter storm.



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A PORTFOLIO BY LARRY LINDAHL

"When one tugs at a single thing in nature, he finds it attached to the rest of the world."

—JOHN MUIR

Crimson cliff ledges offer a display of icicles and snow during winter in Boynton Canyon.

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Archaeoastronomy is the study of prehistoric sites where ancient people once aligned rock art to celestial events. There are places like this all over the Southwest — places that intentionally catch sunrise on crucial mornings such as the solstice or equinox, or are aligned with the long rhythms of the moon. On a recent morning on the Mogollon Rim, our intrepid essayist stumbled upon some archaeoastronomers at work.

By Craig Childs

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I heard voices and I woke.

It was just before dawn. An inkling of light touched the sky outside the tent. Wind belted through a surrounding copse of juniper trees and piñon pines. I could barely hear them, men talking, coming closer.

I was camped with my wife and baby son in the sea-green forests just north of the Mogollon Rim in the central part of Arizona. The dry lands of the Colorado Plateau end there and a dense wave of pines blankets an eighth of the state from there south. No one but us should have been there on that morning, miles from the nearest paved road.

"Did you hear that?" Regan whispered.

"Yeah," I whispered back. "Someone's here."

"Three of them," Regan said.

I immediately slipped into my clothes, pulled socks on, then boots. Warm hat. Gloves. We were at nearly 7,000 feet in elevation, the morning brisk. The voices were starting to fade, heading off the other way. I laced my boots faster.

"Archaeoastronomers," I whispered to Regan. It was the only thing I could imagine, perhaps an odd conclusion, but the first thing that came to mind. Archaeoastronomy is the study of ancient sites where people once aligned rock art or architecture to celestial events. Such sites are all over the Southwest, places that intentionally catch sunrise on crucial mornings like the solstice or equinox, or are aligned with the long rhythms of the moon. We had found a rock art panel nearby in the forest the day before, and it struck me as one that might have archaeological significance. It was in the direction the men's voices were heading. Maybe they were coming up to check the sunrise, to see how its first light interacted with rock art figures. Why else would someone be there before dawn?

"I'll follow them," I hushed, zipping open the tent door. "I'll be back."

"Or they're pothunters," Regan said.

"Yeah, I thought about that," I said. That was another option. There are ruined pueblos all over this area, fields of broken, pre-Columbian pottery. They might have come with shovels and screens, maybe guns. Diggers looking for artifacts to sell on the black market. But somehow it seemed more likely that they were archaeoastronomers, judging by the exact hour of their arrival.

"I'll just see what they're up to," I said, and I zipped the door closed behind me.

The three voices had gotten well ahead of me in the chill wind. The men knew exactly where they were going, no pausing or looking for directions. They had been there before. I took off after them.

In the first light, pieces of pottery began appearing up the slope, remains of people from the 14th century, black-on-whites, black-on-reds, yellow wares. People had been living in settlements all around there. When I neared the top of the mesa, I stopped in shadows where I could see two of the three men above me. One carried camera equipment. Their movements were informal, unaware someone had followed them, that anyone else was out there at all. Their shoulders were jacked up against the wind, their heads down

Comet Hale-Bopp (right) streaked across the sky over Arizona's high country in March 1997. PHOTOGRAPH BY FRANK ZULLO

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Archaeoastronomers study ancient rock art that marks large boulders scattered across the Mogollon Rim. PHOTOGRAPH BY NICK BEREZENKO

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as they unloaded gear in an upheaval of large basalt boulders. The boulders were covered with rock art.

I looked for shovels, screens, perhaps a weapon that might identify these men as pothunters. Nothing of the sort. They had a sole purpose. They had come for sunrise. The two men sank down in front of a tall block of a boulder black as charcoal, taking shelter, their gloved hands tucked into their coats. I approached through the trees, slowly, my hands at my sides.

The man with the camera saw me first, a clean-shaven face caught suddenly at the sight of a stranger out of the woods. The slightly older man with a trim gray beard saw me next, and both of their faces went half-blank with confusion. I could see in their eyes that this site was not public knowledge.

I opened a hand, unarmed, friendly. I had to shout over the wind, asking if they were there for an alignment. The photographer did not move. The bearded man stood up and he seemed to be thinking there are enough oddities and coincidences in the world, why not a man appearing from the woods who knows these ancient maps?

The photographer rose behind him. We peeled off gloves to shake hands. They introduced themselves, both from the Museum of Northern Arizona in Flagstaff, a photo archivist and a bearded archaeologist. They were there for sunrise. "And the third man?" I asked.

"He's the steward for this site," the photographer said. "He's working with the Forest Service, and he's kind of old, so it's taking him awhile to get up here."

"And you've come for an alignment?" I asked again.

The archaeologist, Jerry Snow, told me that the rock art panels there seem to be a kind of calendar. He had been coming for years charting different sunrises, documenting the way first light strikes various images carved in the rock.

I explained that my wife, our son and I were camped down lower, that we heard them come through, figured it could mean only one thing. They laughed. Snow said there aren't many of us in the world. I nodded, even though I was not one of them, not an archaeoastronomer. I was at least in on the secret, peeping into this subculture of people who document signs of prehistoric astronomy.

The third man approached with some difficulty, poking a thick walking stick ahead of him. He came out from around black boulders, his peaked hood protecting his ears from the wind. When he approached me and stopped, his body was like a truck lurching to a halt, swaying against its brakes. I could not read the age of his face under his hood, 70 years old, 80 maybe, but his expression was at least serene, not at all surprised to see someone there this morning. He introduced himself as Joe, the steward for this place, assigned by the Forest Service. With a handshake, I felt his large hands, a working man. He overlapped both his hands on the knob of his wooden staff.

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Store/Kegs

Meeting Joe, I thought there had probably been stewards there for generations, for centuries, wizards and eccentric, dawdling rubes waving their sticks in the air, plodding up there to make sure light was still coming on schedule. Joe smiled under the shadow of his hood, his shoulders heavy over his walking stick.

Snow, the archaeoastronomer, took me aside to point out various facets of the rock art panel. He toured me through tightly scrolled spirals and distinct but hardly identifiable symbols.

"Most of the activity seems to be based around this central spiral," he said, circling his hand around an east-facing plane of basalt decorated with numerous carved figures. He explained that just before the summer solstice, a perfect sliver of light comes across the large spiral in the middle, and its tip touches the very center like the point of a knife.

The same kind of spiral is found on Fajada Butte in Chaco Canyon, arranged like a clock face so that daggers of light form intentional patterns on the winter solstice, the summer solstice, and the spring and autumnal equinoxes. The same spiral-and-dagger arrangement can be found at numerous sites across the Colorado Plateau (other renditions of this have also been documented in Texas).

On this morning, Snow did not know what the sun would do. We were partway between the spring equinox and summer solstice, and he had come, documenting every increment of seasons he could think of.

"Of course you're welcome to be here and watch the event," Jerry said matter-of-factly.

"Thank you," I said, finding his choice of words curious. *The event.* Sunrise.

Not 3 minutes later the sun lifted in the east, a luminous orange turtle. The photographer swung out his tripod, though it would still take some time for light to thread through these boulders and touch the appropriate spiral.

"What time you got?" Snow asked.

The photographer pushed back the sleeve of his coat and said, "5:53."

The sun lifted through a haze of blown dust some 60 miles away in the Painted Desert. There was enough dust in the air between us and the sun that I could look straight at the sun's ball for a second or two at a time. I was amazed at its roundness, a perfect globe formed above the horizon.

I now saw why people had carved their images in this location. The full distance of light was visible from this knuckle of a mesa, no rooftops or heads of trees to block the view. Sunlight came directly from the other side of the planet, striking a gallery of symbols positioned on the line where the desert to the north gives way to forest in the south.

"What time you got?"

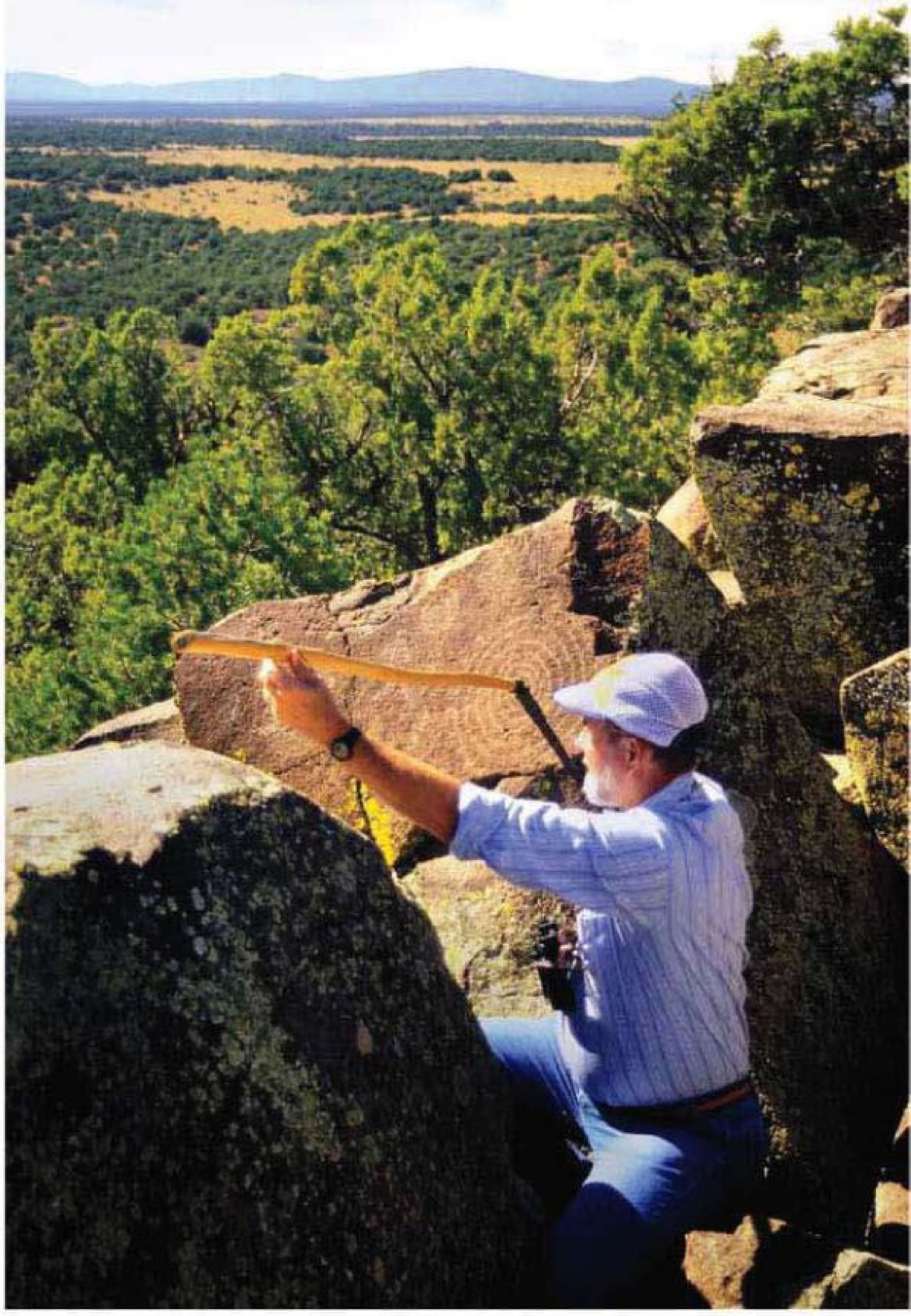
"6:03."

The sun began beating back the dust storm, its light becoming too brilliant to face. We shielded our eyes and turned away, feeling warmth soak into our bodies.

"What time you got?"

"6:04."

Shadows cataracted across boulders around us, lining up with various etchings. Ducking my head, moving lower, I made sure my shadow did not cross any of these images. Keys were turning all around me, locks opening as light passed over lesser spirals and figures of animals. Snow lifted his hand and watched the shadows of his fingers, playing with the light, seeing how many seconds remained before it reached the central spiral. He pulled out his tape measure and took quick measurements. Joe stood back watching, a gnome with a peaked hood and broad shoulders.



Phil Garn measures a possible solar alignment with a spiral petroglyph at Chavez Pass. PHOTOGRAPH BY NICK BEREZENKO

"What time?" Snow asked.

"6:10."

Light rolled quickly down the spiral and within a minute it severed the image exactly in half, one side in light, the other in shadow. The photographer moved from place to place, crawling over the rock, taking pictures from different angles as the clock face revealed itself. The straightedge formed between light and shadow cantilevered across the boulder, one-by-one touching other images carved on the rock. As each figure came into alignment, they seemed to be coordinates, as if on a Cartesian chart; the abscissa of the shadow line, the ordinate of stone.

"This is what I was hoping to see," Snow said, and he began describing each figure, telling me how they fit in certain houses of the sun, how they are addressed by the light in orderly, annual sequences. Basically, Snow was describing a form of astrology, perhaps used in its oldest and most original definition: a scientific study of celestial motion.

The light show ended when all the carved figures were fully illuminated. We moved down off these boulders into a bit of shelter below where we sat, shoulder to shoulder, as if we had known each other for years. Joe kneaded the handle of his walking stick. The light kept coming, falling across pine forests the color of mint, showing the way to the Mogollon Rim.

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OUT THERE

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Odd, quirky, outlandish, strange ... there are plenty of adjectives to describe some of the stuff you'll see along the road in rural Arizona. Bizarre, weird and wacky will work, as well. What follows are 10 of our favorite peculiarities, but this is just the beginning.

R.I.E.!

By JACKIE DISHNER

Photographs by MARK LIPCZYNSKI

AIN'T YOU'S A GOOD TIME ALL

Giganticus Headicus, Kozy Corner Mobile Home & RV Park, Kingman

If you've driven it before, you expect to see roadside oddities on Historic Route 66 — or at least things that make you turn your head and then stop the car for a photo. The giant Tiki head at the Kozy Corner Trailer Park, located 15 miles east of the Kingman airport, is one of those head-turners. The 7-year-old sculpture, painted green, is officially known as Giganticus Headicus. It's an oddity, for sure, one that even attracted the attention of Hollywood — it was photographed for the 2007 television show *Space Pirate*. Owner Greg Arnold, originally from New Jersey, says he imagined something larger than 14 feet, but that's the largest two-by-four he could get without special delivery. It was also the first time Arnold had worked with stucco, Styrofoam and chicken wire. "I couldn't get any help from the guys at Home Depot," he says. "They thought I was nuts." Tourists might beg to differ. From the girls who stopped by to pose topless for annual visits from David Childress, who hosts *Ancient Alien Technology* on TV, the giant head has some serious fans.

Information: 928-681-4238 or www.giantheadonroute66.com

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LARGEST LOG CABIN IN ARIZONA

Museum Club, Flagstaff

It's been a museum, a home to a couple who died there and a roadhouse. The bar has served celebrities and college students alike. The place even picked up a nickname, "The Zoo," during its 95-year-history. Some people even say it's haunted. The one thing that hasn't changed since Dean Eldredge, the original founder of Arizona's largest log cabin, decided to house an odd collection of taxidermy there in 1915 is its front door. You still enter through the pine branch that's shaped like a wishbone. An icon on Historic Route 66, you probably can't find a graduate of Northern Arizona University who hasn't bought a beer or two at the Museum Club, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. To see more of its quirks, step inside. There you'll find a fireplace with lava formations and petrified wood embedded in the mantle, several antler chandeliers, pine trees on the dance floor and plenty of stuffed buffalo heads. Bands play live music every weekend, and customers come from all over the world for a chance to hang out at this quirky old bar.

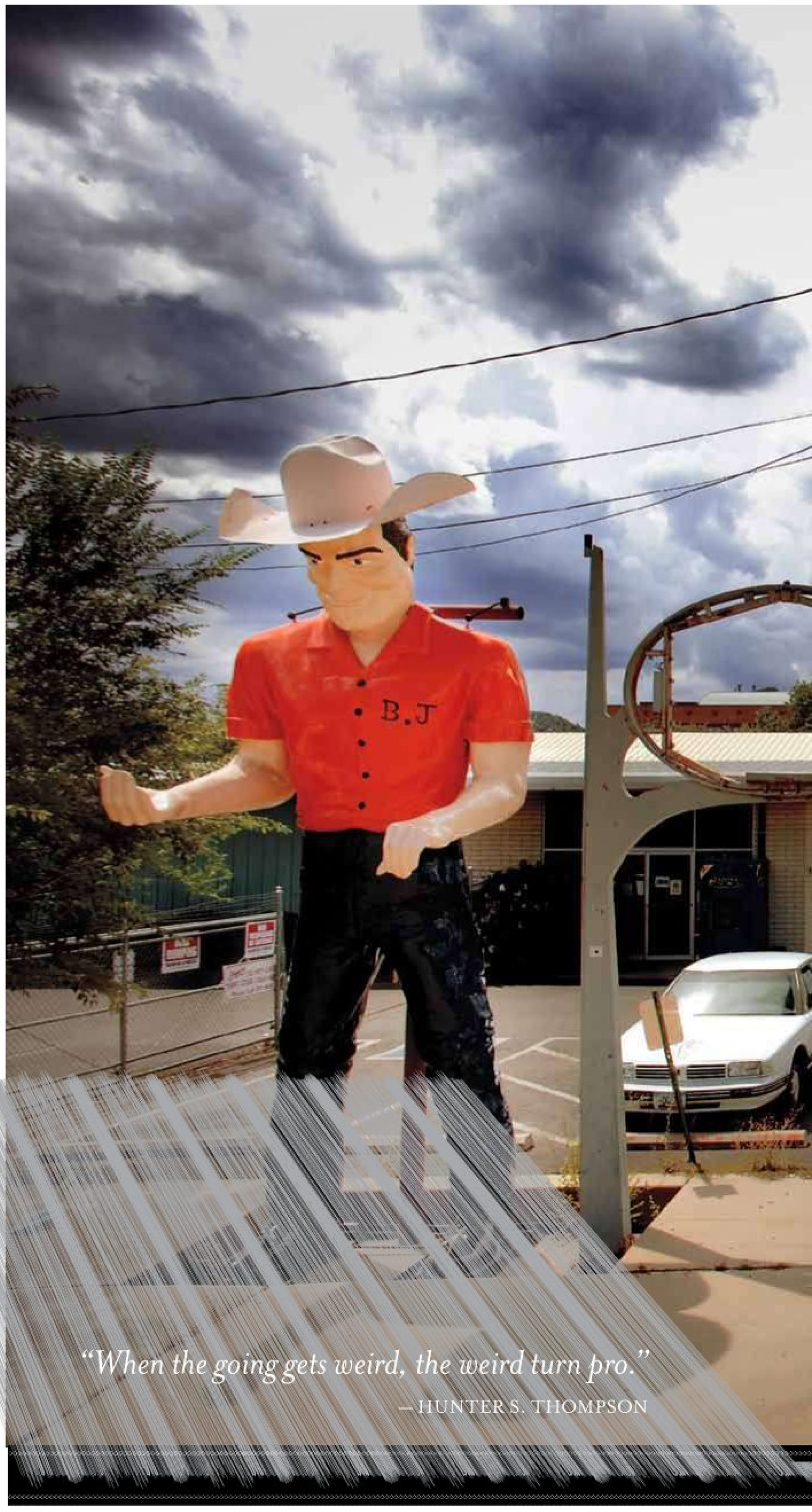
Information: 928-526-9434 or www.museumclub.com

WORLD'S BIGGEST BABY

The Roadside Baby, Goodyear

Although he's now almost 12 years old, the big baby sitting in the middle of a field on the north side of Interstate 10 and playing with a yellow tractor hasn't grown an inch. At 20 feet, he's just as tall as he was when he first started playing out there in 1998. And consider him lucky — he wasn't supposed to live this long. That's because he's made of plywood and painted in acrylics. In fact, John Cerney, the California-based mural artist who created the big baby, didn't expect him to last more than 5 years. If you're not looking, you might miss the cute blond kid in blue-and-white-striped overalls near the Cotton Lane exit, despite the baby's height. Modeled after Jaymee Lawton, a 13-year-old Goodyear resident whose grandmother worked at Duncan Family Farms, the baby was commissioned to be a marker to call attention to the farm's exit. The 2,000-acre farm offered you-pick vegetable fields, a play area and a petting zoo. At one time, there were several other plywood cutouts that played in the field with the big baby, including one that must have been his mother. Today, only the baby and the tractor are left, and the farm is closed.

Information: 623-932-3910



"When the going gets weird, the weird turn pro."

— HUNTER S. THOMPSON

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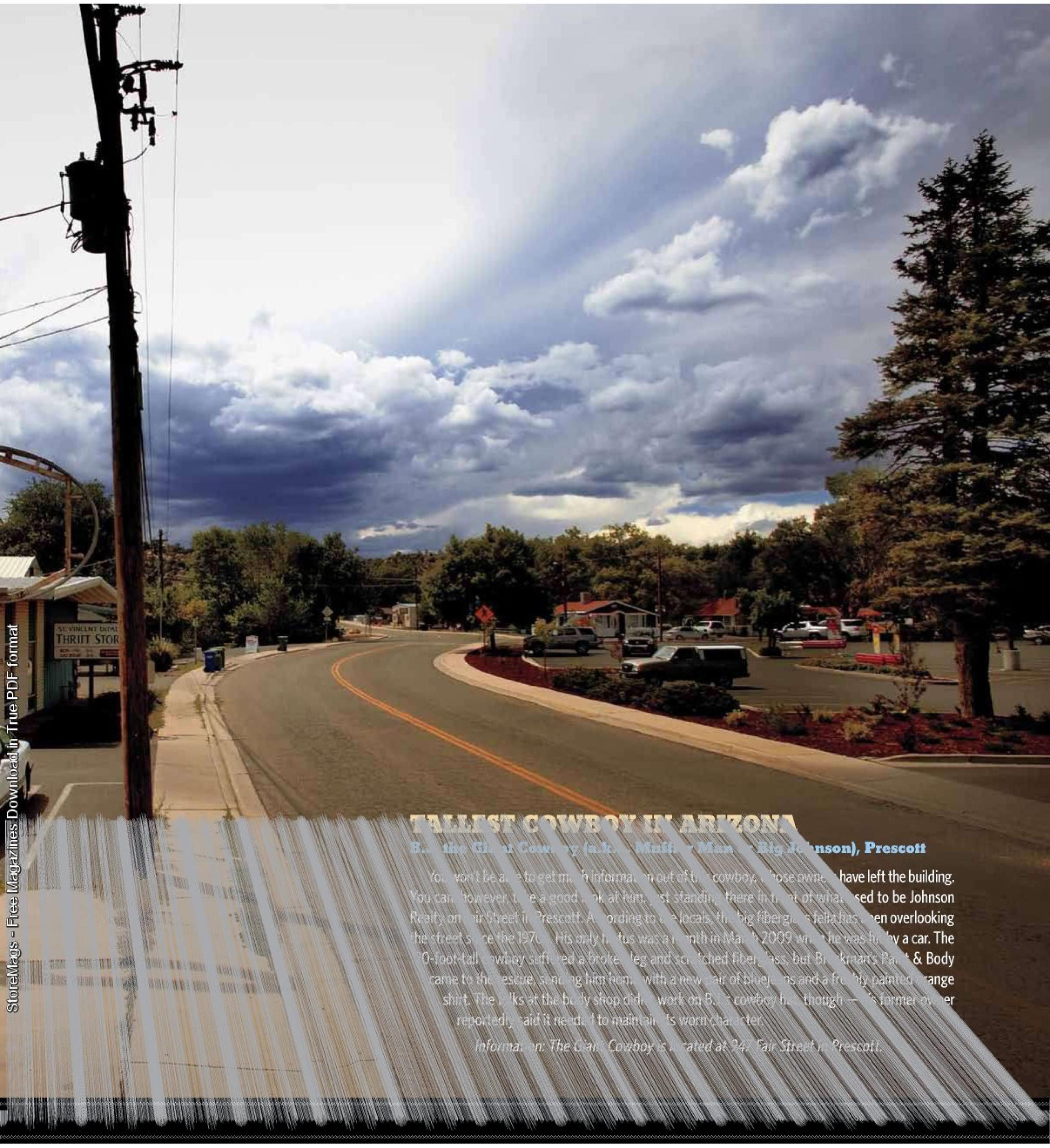

TALLEST COWBOY IN ARIZONA

B... the Gi... Cow...y (a.k... Muffi... Man ... Big Johnson), Prescott

You won't be able to get much information out of the cowboy, whose owner have left the building. You can, however, take a good look at him. Just standing there in front of what used to be Johnson Realty on Fair Street in Prescott. According to the locals, the big fiberglass fella has been overlooking the street since the 1970s. His only hiatus was a month in March 2009 when he was hit by a car. The 30-foot-tall cowboy suffered a broken leg and scratched fiberglass, but Brickman's Paint & Body came to the rescue, sending him home with a new pair of blue jeans and a freshly painted orange shirt. The folks at the body shop did their work on Big's cowboy hat, though — his former owner reportedly said it needed to maintain its worn character.

Information: The Giant Cowboy is located at 947 Fair Street in Prescott.

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A PRETTY BIG SUNDIAL

Carefree

In terms of giant time-tellers, Carefree's famed sundial might not rival Big Ben, but it does boast the title of "America's Largest Sundial." A plaque on the famous dial reports that a solar engineer named John Yellot and architect Joe Wong designed the sundial for K.T. Palmer, one of the town's founders, in 1959. At the time, it was the largest sundial in the world. One built in India has since claimed the title. Whatever its title, it is big — it stretches 62 feet and has its own motto: "Marking time by day and the North Star at night." Located at the corner of Easy Street and Sundial Circle, the dial was once used to help heat a solar-powered business behind it by piping water to the business and back. Today, it's simply used to tell time. The colored-glass starburst that once hung from the gnomon, the stationary arm that casts the time-telling shadow on the ground, is now on display at the Cave Creek Museum.

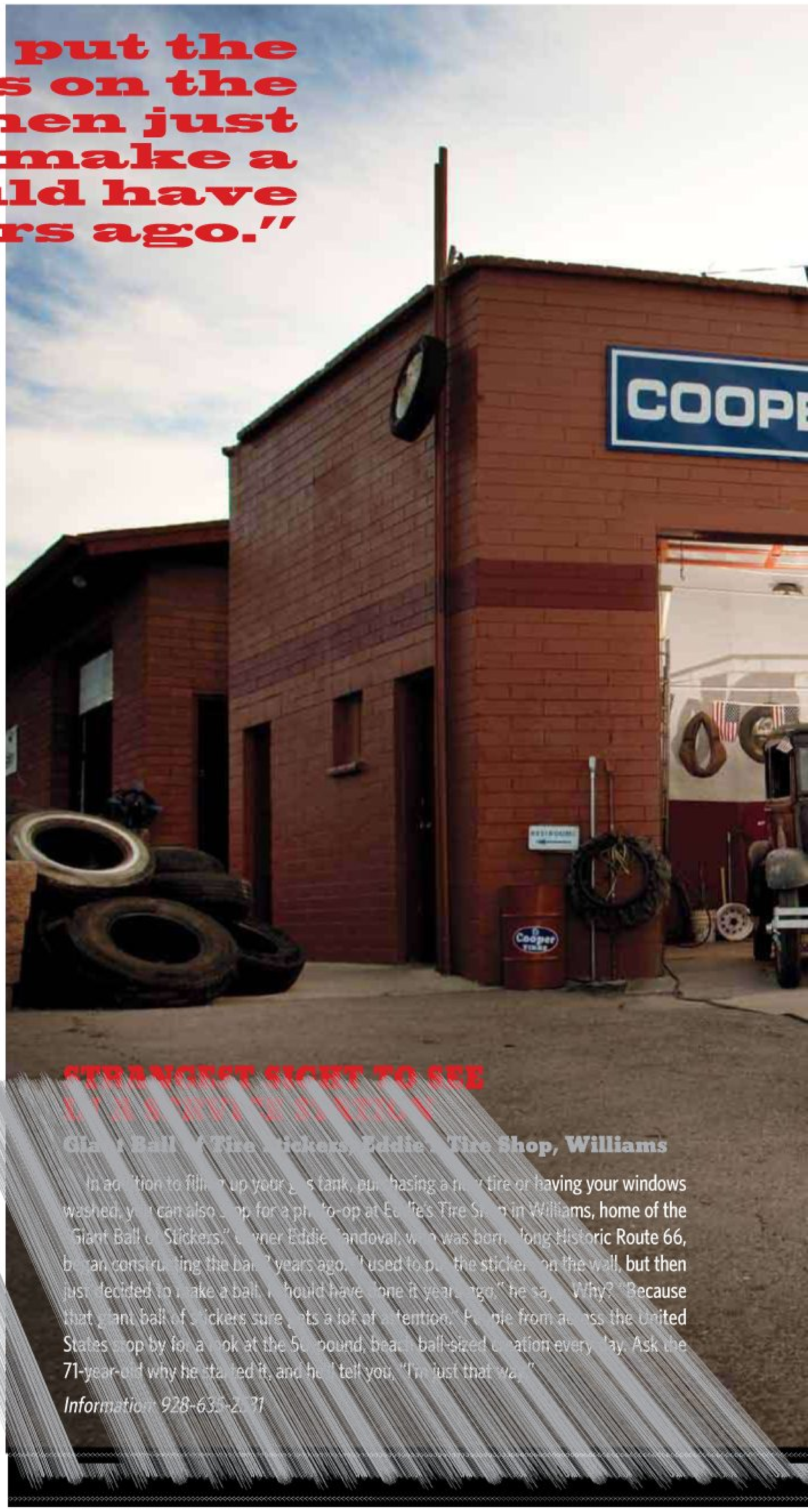
Information: www.carefree.org

WORLD'S LARGEST ROSEBUSH

Rosetree Museum, Tombstone

You'll see her when you reach the corner of Fourth and Toughnut streets — the largest rosebush in the world. Called Lady Banksia, the plant now covers 8,400 square feet and is held up by an arbor made of galvanized piping and patio posts. Last August, landscapers added another row to the arbor on her west side to make room for continued growth. The rosebush, which was planted from the root of a bush that came from Scotland in 1885, is watered about once a week and pruned once a year. The original root was planted by Mary Gee at her Tombstone boardinghouse. The best time to visit is in April, when the miniature white petals on this rambling rose are in full bloom.

Information: 520-457-3326



STRANGEST SIGHT TO SEE

Giant Ball of Tire Stickers, Eddie's Tire Shop, Williams

In addition to filling up your gas tank, purchasing a new tire or having your windows washed, you can also stop for a photo-op at Eddie's Tire Shop in Williams, home of the "Giant Ball of Stickers." Owner Eddie Sandoval, who was born along Historic Route 66, began constructing the ball years ago. "I used to put the stickers on the wall, but then just decided to make a ball. I should have done it years ago," he says. Why? "Because that giant ball of stickers sure gets a lot of attention." People from across the United States stop by for a look at the 50-pound, beach ball-sized creation every day. Ask the 71-year-old why he started it, and he'll tell you, "I'm just that way."

Information: 928-635-2171

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"Be who you are and say what you feel because those who mind don't matter and those who matter don't mind." — DR. SEUSS

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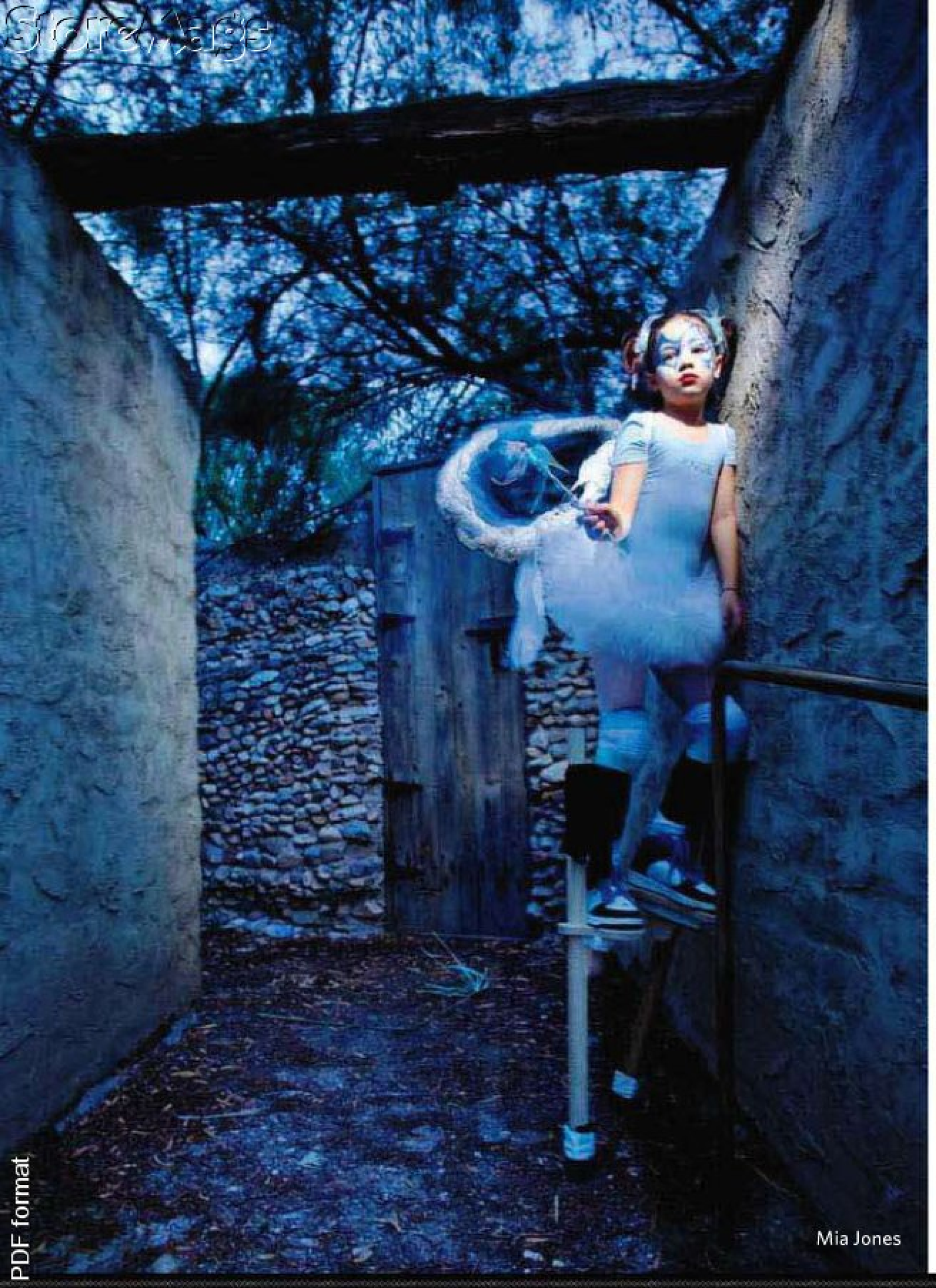


Mia Jones

STRANGEST FANTASYLAND

Valley of the Moon, Tucson

They call it 2.7 acres of wonderland, but it's actually George Phar Legler's idea of a place where children's imaginations can work overtime. Legler, an Indiana native who moved out West, conjured up Valley of the Moon in the 1920s. Built from concrete, metal, wire, river rock and whatever other items Legler could recycle, reuse or find someplace else, Valley of the Moon features castles, towers, rock cliffs, caves, pools, gardens, gnomes and fairy houses in the middle of the desert. The landscape was designated an Arizona Historic Place in 1975 and represents Legler's idea that "kindness to all is the golden key to happiness." For 40 years, he hosted free tours in costume, acting as the characters dreamed up by his favorite childhood authors, including Robert Lewis Stevenson, C.S. Lewis and Lewis Carroll. Today, volunteers continue to operate Valley of the Moon. The tours are still free and offered the first Saturday of every month. Local actors now perform the interpretive walks through the park, which last less than an hour.

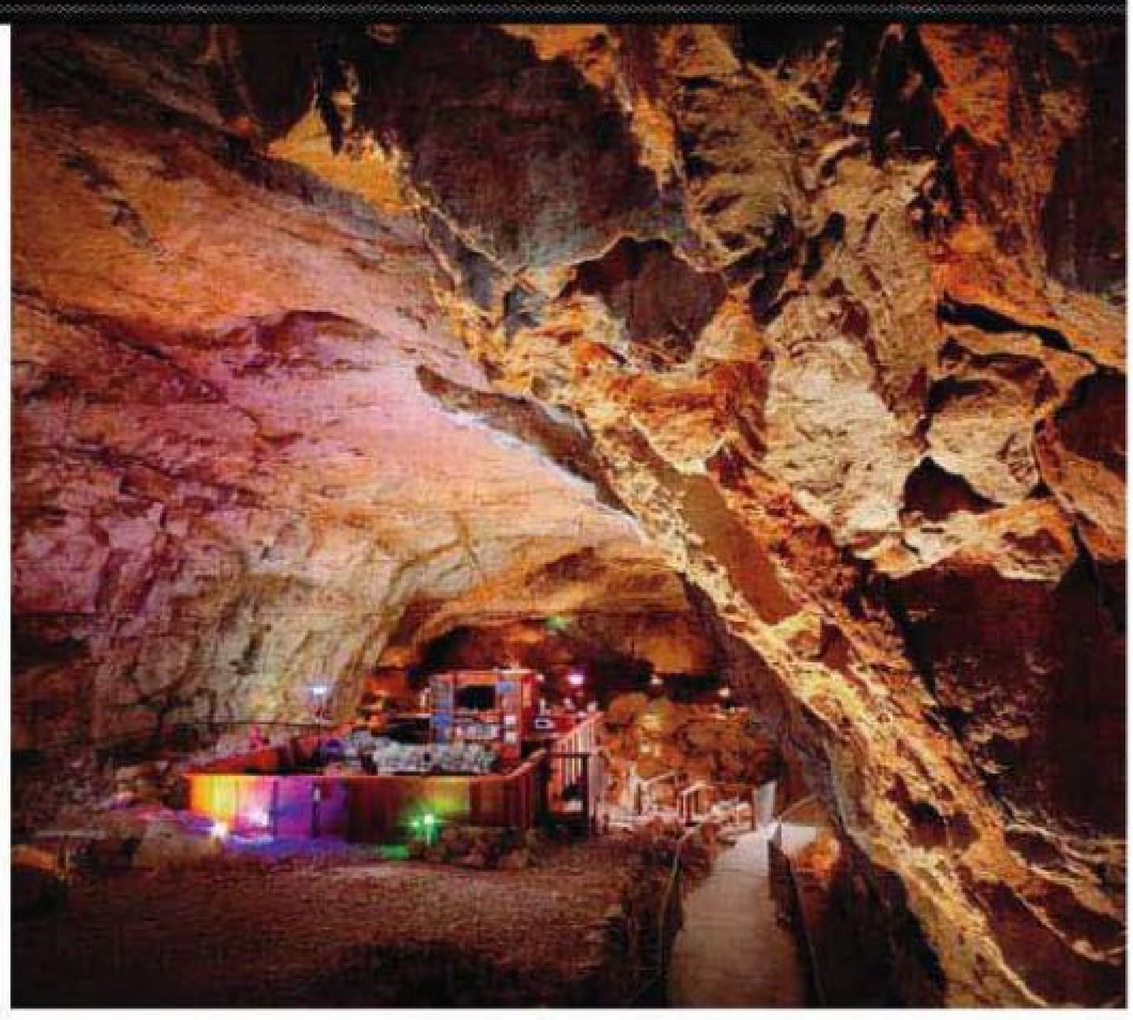
Information: 520-323-1331 or www.tucsonvalleyofthemoon.com

LARGEST, OLDEST, DEEPEST, DARKEST, QUIETEST MOTEL ROOM IN THE WORLD

Grand Canyon Caverns Suite, Historic Route 66

Think you could spend the night in a 65 million-year-old cavern, 220 feet below ground? The first people to attempt it — a mother and her young-adult daughter — didn't want to leave the furnished hideaway. For $700 a night, who would? In the cave, you're assigned a personal attendant, so you know you can leave by elevator at any time, day or night. You can play the vintage record player or old-fashioned board games. You'll get a private tour to see parts of the cave the average touring guest won't. After that, you can order champagne, the bottle delivered to your very own 400-foot-long underworld. Since the Grand Canyon Caverns opened its new "suite" — tucked within the so-called largest deposit of selenite crystals in the world — to guests last January, the operators have accepted 10 reservations. The suite sleeps six.

Information: 928-422-4565 or www.grandcanyoncaverns.com



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WORLD'S LARGEST KOKOPELLI

Krazy Kokopelli, Camp Verde

With the power to bring rain to dry lands, this giant being, modeled in the Hopi Indian tradition, appears to be dancing while playing the flute near the intersection of Interstate 17 and State Route 260 in Camp Verde. According to Hopi legend, Kokopelli only appears during the first half of the year, but this version dances year-round. The 32-foot-tall steel structure stands in sharp contrast to traditional kachinas, which are commonly carved from cottonwood roots. In Arizona, the Kokopelli has become a popular trading-post staple. Icon or eyesore, this giant perches atop a pedestal next to the Starbucks sign in front of the Crazy Kokopelli Trading Post, and was commissioned by a man whose business on Finnie Flats Road is now closed.

Information: 928-567-5846

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scenic drive

BILL WILLIAMS RIVER ROAD

Along with your other New Year's resolutions, make a plan to visit this scenic drive along the Colorado River.

BY ROGER NAYLOR

Bill Williams was a legendary mountain man whose name graces landmarks across Arizona. Of those, it's the scenic desert river that truly embodies old Bill's adventurous spirit as it tumbles across wild, untamed country.

Bill Williams River carves a verdant slash across an otherwise forbidding landscape, soothing the sun-scarred crossroads where the Sonoran and Mohave deserts collide. It's one of only two tributaries to the Colorado River below the Grand Canyon. Established in 1941 to protect this vital waterway, the Bill Williams River National Wildlife Refuge covers 6,105 acres and stretches from the marshy confluence at Lake Havasu back through the lush river valley.

The highlight of any visit to the refuge is making the short, sweet drive down Bill Williams River Road. The dirt road enters the river valley on the hilly shoulder of desert upland, overlooking the forested oasis. Cattails cradle the spreading marsh and saguaros stretch down the slopes as if ambling toward the welcome shade of cottonwood trees.

The refuge contains one of the last stands of cottonwoods and willows found in the Lower Colorado River basin, providing essential habitat for a variety of wildlife. A century ago, these forests extended for miles. That began to change during the era of paddle-wheelers, as crews cut down trees to fuel the big steamboats. In 1935, Hoover Dam was built, followed by several smaller dams over the ensuing decades. As the river backed up into a series of lakes, the riparian ecosystem was permanently altered.

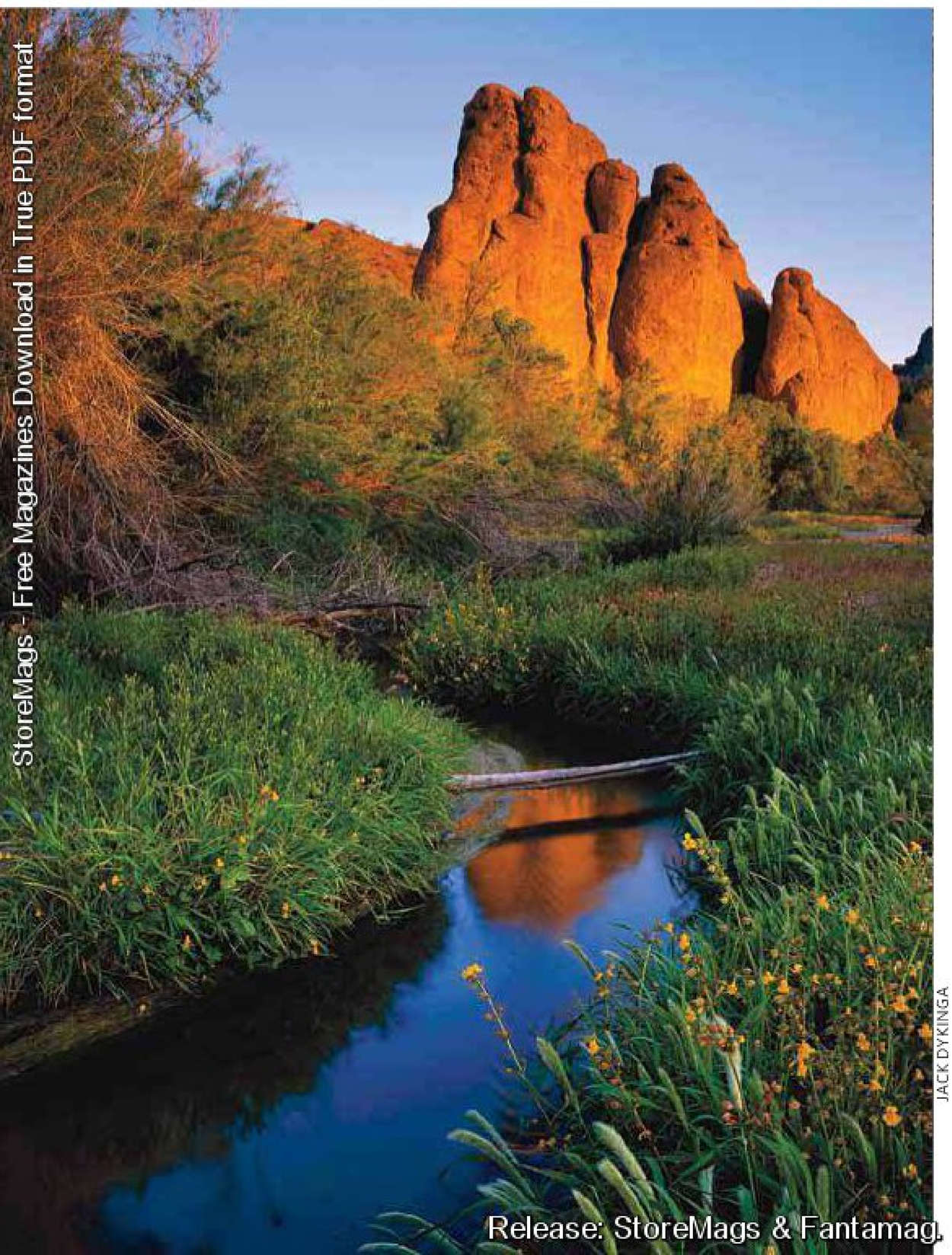
Today, an eight-agency partnership works with the Army Corps of Engineers to manage water flow from Alamo Dam as part of a habitat restoration project along Bill Williams River. The comprehensive approach has paid off. More than 360 species of birds have been identified within the sanctuary, including the endangered Yuma clapper rail and the southwestern willow flycatcher. The refuge supports 34 species of butterflies, many of which are absent or extremely rare elsewhere along the Colorado. Native fish such as the endangered razorback suckers and bonytail chubs are raised and reintroduced from the refuge.

The road brushes past high volcanic cliffs harboring a population of desert bighorn sheep, and across riparian flats echoing with a chorus of birdsong. Virtually nowhere else in the world can you stroll among a cluster of saguaros intermingled with cattails or stand with one foot in a marsh and the other in the Mohave. Watch for a small slot canyon on your left about 1.5 miles in. It's worth exploring if rain clouds aren't sagging overhead. To preserve the primitive character of the area, no developed trails exist in this section of the refuge, but plenty of paths traverse the open country and penetrate the woodlands around it. The road ends at a gate 3.5 miles from the highway.

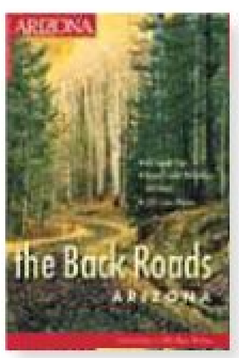
Get out and walk. Find a tree to sit under. Listen to the splash of water and lilting harmonies wafting from the branches. Count butterflies wobbling past. Savor a moment of genuine tranquility — the kind you only find far from civilization. Old Bill Williams would have wanted it that way.

EDWARD MCCAIN

BELOW AND RIGHT: As it winds through Western Arizona, Bill Williams River offers wildlife a riparian habitat in a harsh desert environment.



JACK DYKINGA



ADDITIONAL READING: For more scenic drives, pick up a copy of our book, *The Back Roads*. Now in its fifth edition, the book ($19.95) features 40 of the state's most scenic drives. To order a copy, call 800-543-5432 or visit www.arizonahighways.com/books.

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tour guide

Note: Mileages are approximate.

LENGTH: 3.5 miles

DIRECTIONS: Bill Williams River National Wildlife Refuge is located 17 miles north of Parker along State Route 95 between mileposts 160 and 161. Bill Williams River Road is located 0.3 miles north of the visitors center, between mileposts 161 and 162. Watch for a small sign displaying binoculars.

VEHICLE REQUIREMENTS: None

WARNING: Back-road travel can be hazardous, so be aware of weather and road conditions. Carry plenty of water. Don't travel alone and let someone know where you are going and when you plan to return.

INFORMATION: Bill Williams River National Wildlife Refuge, 928-667-4144 or www.fws.gov/southwest/refuges/arizona/

Travelers in Arizona can visit www.az511.gov or dial 511 to get information on road closures, construction, delays, weather and more.

ONLINE For more scenic drives in Arizona, visit www.arizonahighways.com/scenicdrives.

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hike OF THE month

BOG SPRINGS/KENT SPRINGS LOOP

Overeat over the holidays? This trail is a great way to shake off the cookies and mashed potatoes.

BY ROBERT STIEVE
PHOTOGRAPHS BY RANDY PRENTICE

elegant trogons are rare. In fact, Sasquatch has probably been spotted more often than the trogon, a colorful bird that migrates from Mexico to Madera Canyon in the spring. For bird-watchers in Arizona, the elegant trogon is the Holy Grail. It's related to the quetzal, and if you see one, consider yourself lucky. If you don't, don't worry. Your trip to Madera Canyon and the surrounding Mount Wrightson Wilderness Area won't be without reward. That's because this is one of the most beautiful places in the Southwest.

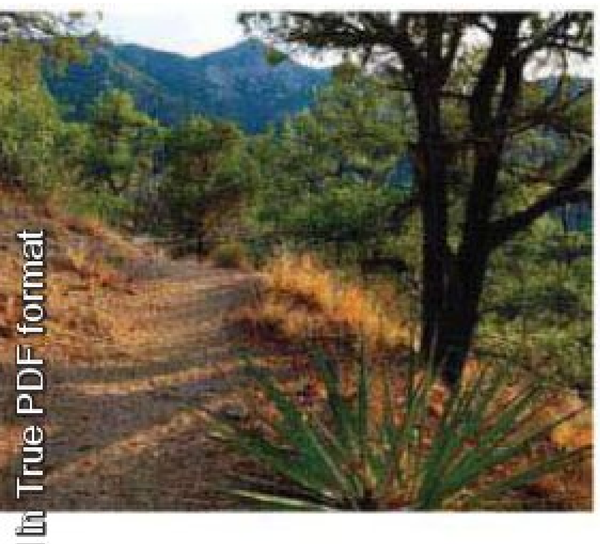
In addition to the elegant trogon — and 199 other species of birds — the area is home to black bears, mountain lions, deer, coatimundis, coyotes, bubbling springs, green grasses, big trees and panoramic views. There are hiking trails, too, including the Bog Springs/Kent Springs Loop, which offers a quick and easy introduction to the area.

The trail begins in the Bog Springs Campground at site No. 13. The parking area, however, is located around the corner at the upper end of the campground. It's a short walk from one point to the other. From the trailhead, you'll follow an old road lined with yuccas and junipers for about 20 minutes to the intersection of the two trails. Bog Springs goes left; Kent Springs goes right. You can go either way, but you'll be happier going clockwise. Not because of the Coriolis effect, but because the Kent Springs Trail is steep in places, and you might prefer doing that section as a downhill, rather than as an uphill. It's up to you.

Veering left, the Bog Springs Trail follows a shallow basin cut into the western slopes of the Santa Rita Mountains. A forest of silverleaf oaks and ponderosa pines shades the trail as it meanders between springs sheltered by gnarled Arizona sycamores. After about 40 minutes, you'll come to a second intersection with the Kent Springs Trail, which heads right. To the left is a short spur (0.1 miles) to Bog Springs. Before continuing the loop, head to the springs, where communities of moisture-loving plants cluster around the reliable water source, including Arizona bamboo, Arizona walnuts and colorful clumps of wildflowers. It's a nice diversion, and a great place to stop for a snack. Also, if you happen to have a Yorkiepoo in tow, it's an opportunity for man's best friend to get something to drink.

From Bog Springs, head back to the nearby intersection with the Kent Springs Trail and continue the loop. As you head southward you'll climb gradually, with a few switchbacks thrown in. In all, you'll gain about 800 feet, and along the way the trees will open up from time to time, offering great views of Mount Wrightson and Madera Canyon. On clear days, the panoramas stretch all the way to Kitt Peak Observatory.

After another half-hour or so, you'll come to Kent Springs, which is the highest point on the hike and another great place to refuel. When you're ready to leave, don't be confused by the trail that continues uphill. Instead, take the Kent Springs Trail, which drops sharply to the right and follows an old jeep road that winds around to the trailhead. Heading back, if you're lucky, you'll see water running in the adjacent streambed. And if you're *really* lucky, you'll see an elegant trogon. But don't hold your breath. Your chances of seeing Sasquatch are probably better. ■



BELOW AND OPPOSITE PAGE: A view of Mount Hopkins and the gnarled trunks of Arizona sycamores add interest to the verdant landscape along the Bog Springs/Kent Springs Loop.

trail guide

LENGTH: 5 miles round-trip

DIFFICULTY: Moderate

ELEVATION: 4,820 to 6,620 feet

DIRECTIONS: From Tucson, take Interstate 19 south to the Continental Road/Madera Canyon exit (Exit 63). Go east and follow the signs to Madera Canyon Recreation Area and the Bog Springs Campground. Turn left into the campground and drive around the loop to the trailhead.

VEHICLE REQUIREMENTS: None

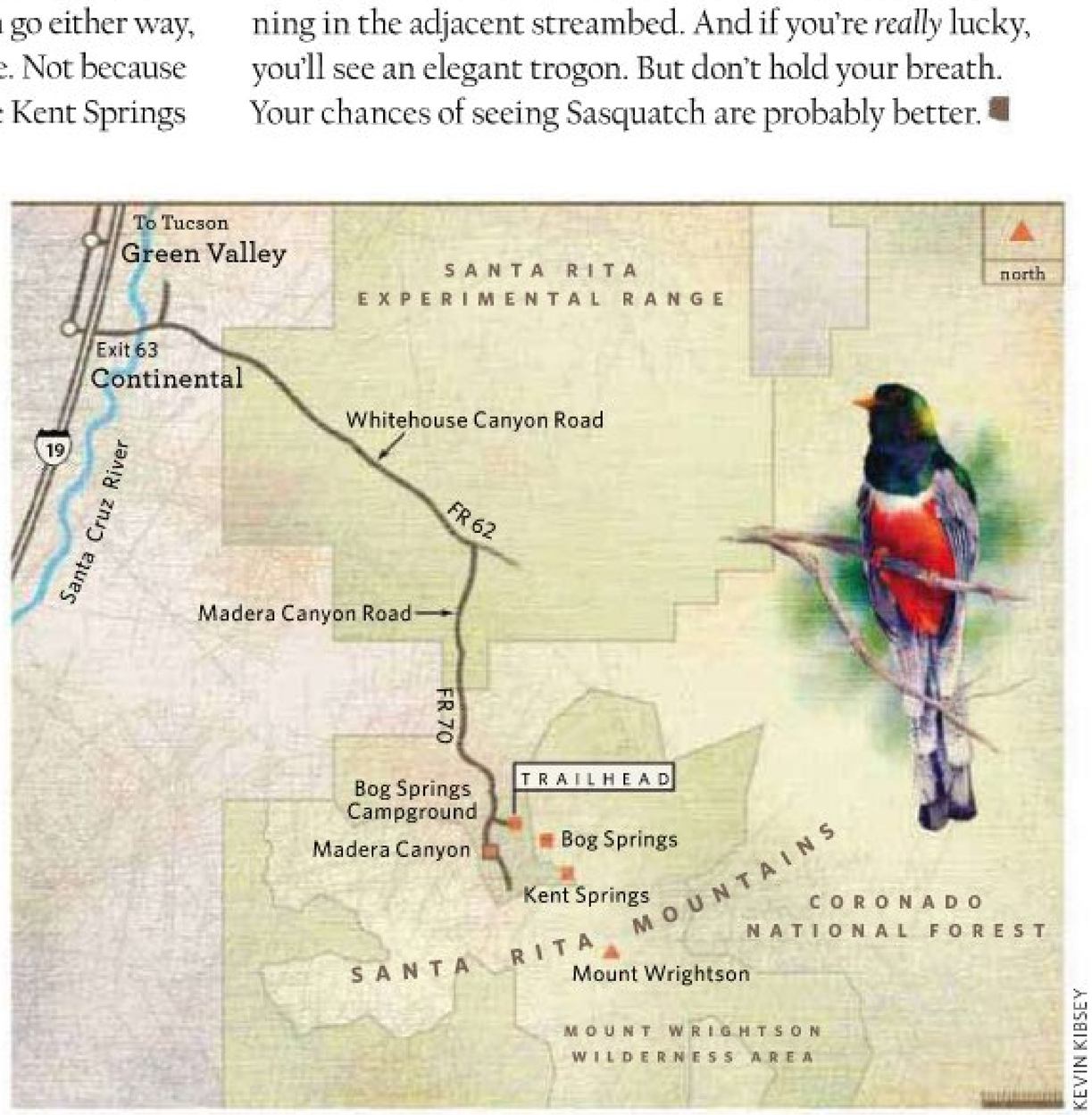
DOGS ALLOWED: Yes (on a leash)

USGS MAP: Mount Wrightson

INFORMATION: Nogales Ranger District, 520-281-2296 or www.fs.fed.us/r3/coronado

LEAVE-NO-TRACE PRINCIPLES:

- Plan ahead and be prepared.
- Travel and camp on durable surfaces.
- Dispose of waste properly and pack out your trash.
- Leave what you find.
- Respect wildlife and minimize impact.
- Be considerate of others.



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where is this?

Falling Into Ruin

BY SALLY BENFORD
PHOTOGRAPH BY KERRICK JAMES

Like any good mystery, these crumbling walls offer a clue. Built for practical purposes, as opposed to architectural, this structure suffered years of abuse from blasting and drilling. In fact, it was that sort of activity that caused this building's downhill slide — much to the delight of its residents at the time. Today, the town surrounding this building is a popular getaway, especially on weekends.

October 2010 Answer: Twin Arrows. Congratulations to our winner, Angela Meixell of Waimaualo, Hawaii.

November 2010 Answer: La Posada Hotel. Congratulations to our winner, Jill Lacy of Grand Junction, Colorado.

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